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A HISTORY
OF THE
STATE PRINTER'S
MONOPOLY
OF
SCHOOL BOOKS
IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA.

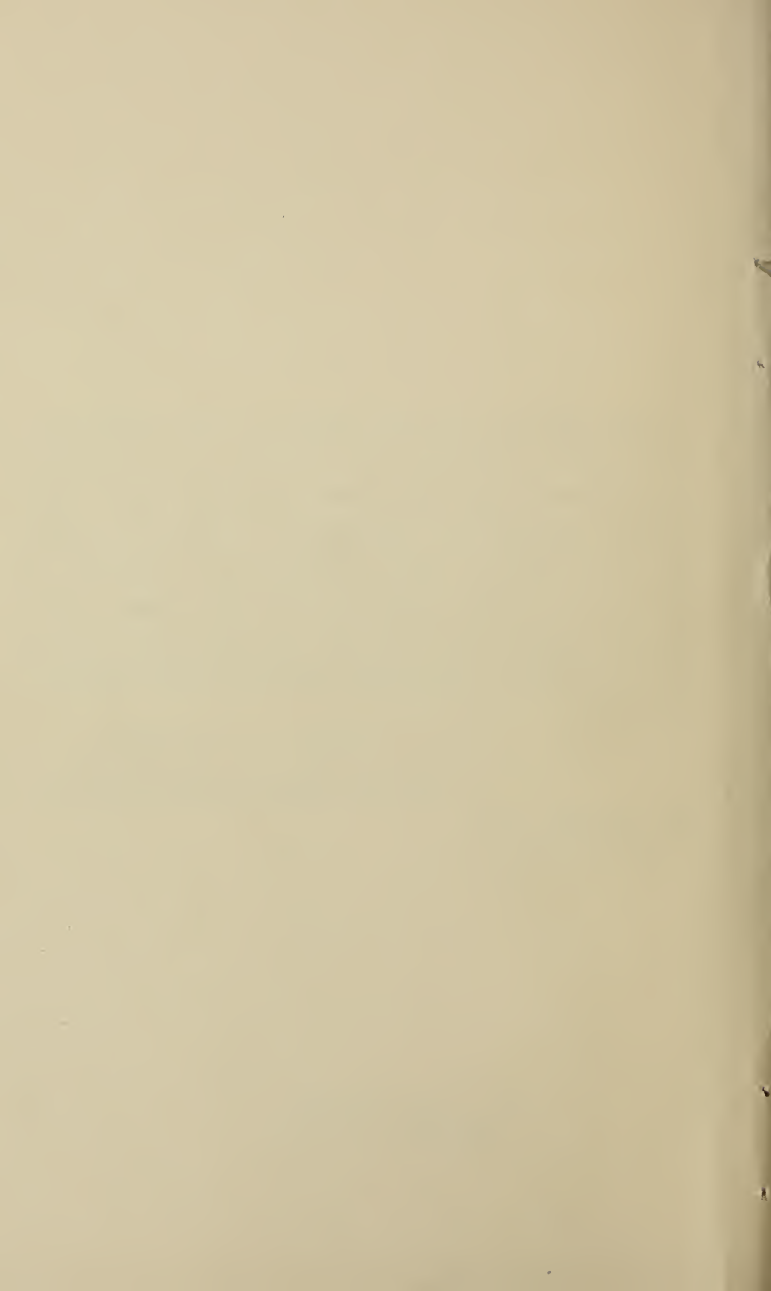
I have read the following history of State school-book publication in California. It is accurate in its statements regarding the origin and conduct of the enterprise, and correctly represents the sentiments of California teachers and school officers. Their sentiments were expressed in resolutions strongly condemning the State books, unanimously adopted at the biennial superintendents' meeting early this month. The system is an educational and financial failure.

FRED. M. CAMPBELL,
Ex-State Superintendent of Schools.

San Francisco, Cal.,

Dec. 24, 1890.

✓ p2106



A History of the State Printer's Monopoly of School Books in the State of California.

FOR some years succeeding 1877 California was in a ferment. The peculiar circumstances of the early settlement of our State had attracted an unusual proportion of the restless and even the lawless elements, which in earliest years had sometimes to be dealt with by an arm stronger than that of the law ; the complete collapse of the mining speculations which had infested all classes of the people had rudely dissipated dreams of wealth and leisure ; the magnificent fruit and wine industries which now give ample employment to all who are willing to work had not then been created, and thousands of honest and willing men and women saw themselves suddenly reduced from imaginary affluence to grinding poverty ; the only prosperous classes were the Bonanza men who had exploited the community with fraudulent mining schemes ; the owners and workers of actual productive mines ; the railroad men, who dominated the State with a tyranny for which they afterward suffered perhaps more than a just retribution ; the mercantile classes of San Francisco, who had profited largely by the extravagant habits engendered by the era of speculation ; and the owners of the great wheat farms, worked by machinery and Chinamen, which then constituted the only important agricultural interest of the State ; for the poor

man there was no present employment and no hope for the future.

Upon this congenial soil was rapidly developed a virulent form of social discontent which became widely known as "Kearnyism." The centre of this boil was San Francisco, where, upon some then vacant sand lots owned by the city, on each Sunday, wild-eyed demagogues, led by a drayman named Kearny, harangued a howling mob and incited it to deeds of violence. But the better class of citizens — comprising, of course, an immense majority of the population — were by no means intimidated ; some leaders of the mob seem to have been bought off, probably as the cheapest course ; others disappeared, possibly from the memory of former dealings with such people in that city ; returning prosperity removed the real causes of discontent, and after a few years, society resumed its normal course.

But during these years of excitement grave injury was done to the State by the many attacks under the form of law, or of proposed law, upon all forms of capital. A new Constitution was adopted, which experience has proved to be innocent enough, but which was intended by its authors as an attack upon capital, and which, in fact, did drive millions of capital from the State, and deferred for years the establishment of those industries which alone could give employment to the idle and prosperity to the State ; railroads, banks, insurance companies were in turn the subjects of attacks, sometimes, doubtless, deserved, and the State was the paradise of those demagogues who pander to popular prejudice and passion in order to secure legislative positions wherein they can introduce bills which business men will pay them to suppress. During the period of ferment the introduction of such bills was an absolutely

certain source of advantage to their authors ; if they were bought off, their real point was gained ; if not, they might pass the bills and get great glory with their constituents ; and at any rate their very introduction would bring some credit ; they had a genuine sure thing, with the chance of a Bonanza.

A CONVENTION EPISODE.

In 1882, when the effects of this mischievous force were at their height, there was a general election, in preparing for which the various party conventions vied with each other in declarations and promises which, it was supposed, would be popular with the unthinking and prejudiced. In the Republican Convention a succession of mere chances brought the one man who for the moment had the ear of the convention — and who had a political motive for carrying some measure over the heads of the Committee on Platform — into communication with some crank whose special hobby was the publication of school books by the State ; the astute politician at once seized upon the idea, and with no knowledge of the subject and no thought beyond scoring an immediate point against his political opponents, introduced the following resolution, which he prefaced by a fervid and telling denunciation of “ Monopolists,” and which was unanimously adopted by the convention with thunders of applause :

“ * * * * We recommend to the Legislature the establishment of some system by which the State shall print and provide the reading and other text-books used in the public schools, supplying the same to the pupils at actual cost.”

The name of the real author of this resolution must slumber in obscurity ; the distinguished gentleman who introduced it could not recall the name half an hour later, if indeed he ever knew it, but he told the writer that he was pretty sure he was not a teacher, nor in any way connected with schools or with education. This was the first public mention of State text-book publication ever made in California ; no teacher, no parent, no school officer had called for it ; no human being, except a few unknown enthusiasts, had apparently thought of it ; and the first public utterance upon the subject was the resolution of a tumultuous political convention practically pledging a great party to see it done.

Among the very few people in the State who had ever considered the subject was one teacher of undoubted honesty and vigor with whom it was the dream of his life. As the teacher, for many years, of a small ungraded school in the outskirts of San Francisco, he had become so impressed by the abject poverty about him as to be willing to sacrifice everything else to cheapness ; vainly believing that at least the State could print cheap text-books, he had been for years an ardent and outspoken advocate of State publication ; he has never had any associate like him, and the earnest and unselfish devotion of this one man to what he believed the interests of his poverty-stricken flock has constituted the only creditable and dignified incident of State publication in California. Happening, at the time, to hold a leading official position among the Knights of Labor, who were then just coming into prominence in the State, he was able subsequently to appear before legislative committees, not only as a teacher, which was convenient and sounded well, but also as the representative of an

organization before which the average legislator of that period was ready to lie down in the dirt and roll over.

The resolution of the Republican Convention was regarded simply as a piece of ordinary political clap-trap — to be forgotten as soon as election was over. The leading newspapers on both sides ignored it; some of the small country papers gave little approving barks after their kind and dropped it; such of the “labor” papers as favored the Republican Party gave it some attention, and the candidate for Congressman-at-large told the writer that he found it decidedly effective in whooping up the back-country meetings. The Democrats, however, carried the election, and in the due course of political events the resolution should have gone into the limbo of oblivion.

When the Legislature met, however, a large number of members, mostly of the class usually mentioned in California as “Cinch men,” were promptly on hand with their text-book bills, and among the earliest resolutions passed by the Senate was one calling on the State Printer for information as to the necessary expense of carrying out the scheme, and that functionary, on the 20th of January, 1883, submitted a remarkable report, of which the following are the essential portions :

“The following estimates are based upon a series of books bound and finished in the same manner as the McGuffey Readers (and Spellers) * * * I drew my estimates for the Arithmetic from Robinson’s Complete Arithmetic; for the Grammar, from Reed and Kellogg’s Grammar and Composition; and for the History, from Barnes’s Brief History of the United States.”

Then follows the detailed estimate for each book, and afterward the following

RECAPITULATION :

Speller,	cost	per	copy	.	.	.	.	.	8.126	cents.
First Reader,	"	"	"	.	.	.	.	.	9.286	"
Second Reader,	"	"	"	.	.	.	.	.	17.920	"
Third Reader,	"	"	"	.	.	.	.	.	24.244	"
Arithmetic,	"	"	"	.	.	.	.	.	28.891	"
Grammar,	"	"	"	.	.	.	.	.	20.167	"
History,	"	"	"	.	.	.	.	.	29.658	"

COMPARATIVE COST OF BOOKS.

BOOK.	STATE COST.	PRESENT RETAIL COST.	DIFFERENCE IN FAVOR OF THE STATE.
Speller,	.08 $\frac{1}{8}$	.18	.09 $\frac{7}{8}$
First Reader,	.09 $\frac{1}{4}$	.20	.10 $\frac{3}{4}$
Second Reader,	.18	.50*	.32
Third Reader,	.24 $\frac{1}{4}$	.90*	.65 $\frac{3}{4}$
Arithmetic,	.28 $\frac{3}{4}$	\$1.00*	.71 $\frac{1}{4}$
Grammar,	.20 $\frac{1}{4}$	1.05*	.84 $\frac{3}{4}$
History,	.29 $\frac{1}{2}$	1.25	.95 $\frac{1}{2}$
	<u>\$1.38 $\frac{1}{8}$</u>	<u>\$5.08</u>	<u>\$3.69 $\frac{7}{8}$</u>

* The retail price of McGuffey's Second Reader was only 35 cents.

* The retail price of McGuffey's Third Reader was only 50 cents.

* The retail price of Robinson's Complete Arithmetic was only 95 cents.

* The retail price of Reed and Kellogg's Higher Grammar was only 75 cents.

GEOGRAPHY.

As no mention is made in the resolution of a Geography, I have excluded that book from my estimates. Yet, as the common-school course would not be complete without it, I will say that an acceptable Geography could be gotten up at a cost proportionate with that of the larger books in the above enumeration. * * * Monteith's Comprehensive Geography costs at retail in this State \$1.50 per copy ; the proportion, therefore, would be, taking the highest cost book in the above table, 35 cents, against \$1.50. * * * *

MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS.

In arriving at the cost to the State of publishing school books, I have made no allowance for waste of capital in the wear and tear of material and machinery for the printing of the books, nor for the original capital devoted to the purchase of such material and machinery. Nor have I touched upon the cost of distribution. But all the expenses would be more than covered by adding 25 per cent.

to the actual cost of the books as given in this table ; while this would represent a fund equal to \$22,485.37, it would only increase the cost of the series to \$1.73¾, leaving even then a difference of \$3.65¼ in favor of the State. * * *

[The paragraph omitted here states that by increasing the facilities of the State Bindery, at a cost of \$10,000, the cost of the books could be *reduced* from his estimate by ten per cent.]

As far as the setting up and printing of the school books is concerned, the State printing office is now nearly capable of doing the work. The only additional machinery required would be two more Hoe Stop Cylinder presses, or one of the latest improved Hoe Perfection presses. The additional type required would be only such as would be necessary to “sort up” the cases to meet the exigencies of special matter in the arithmetic — a mere trifle.* * * *

JAMES J. AYRES,
Superintendent of State Printing.

In this precious document the State Printer, by making an estimate of cost of manufacture which is simply absurd, ignoring all other items of expense, and dishonestly comparing his fraudulent assumed cost of manufacture with an exaggerated statement of the retail prices of books in use, and of course not considering—as it was not his place to do—the educational character of the books to be turned out, figures out a very large apparent saving to the people. The only investment of capital which he states to be required was :

For waste of capital in the wear and tear of material and machinery, and for the original capital devoted to the purchase of such material and machinery	\$22,485.37
For bindery	10,000.00
For sorting-up type — “a mere trifle.”	
Total investment, exclusive of one printing press	\$32,485.37

The absurdity and dishonesty of this estimate cannot be fully appreciated until we come to the actual results which have been reached under the legislation which was effected, but some idea of the fraud may be gathered from the fact that the *same State Printer*, James J. Ayres, two years later, *when the State had become definitely committed to the scheme*, made the following estimate for the same purpose, as appears by the Governor's Message of 1885 :

Alterations and improvement of building	\$ 5,000.00
Two large book presses	13,000.00
New boiler and engine, shafting, pulleys and running gear throughout the entire building, together with steam-heating pipes, etc.	5,000.00
Large bindery outfit	10,000.00
Electrotyping apparatus complete	5,000.00
Two fonts of type	2,500.00
Engraving	3,000.00
	<hr/>
	\$43,500.00
Pay roll for bindery	15,000.00
Stock	43,500.00
Other expenses	13,000.00
	<hr/>
	\$115,000.00

These estimates, however, although seemingly sufficiently liberal, as compared with that made originally, were subsequently again revised, and the State Printer and the State Board of Education asked for an appropriation of \$250,000 to *begin* the work ! And \$170,000 was actually appropriated, \$150,000 of which was for the State Printer, and \$20,000 for the State Board of Education, to be used for "compiling"—that being the legislative idea of the method of producing text-books.*

*"Compiling"—or, in plain English, *stealing* the work of successful authors is the only method ever proposed for the preparation of State text-books. In one Legislature a member introduced a bill, which met with a good deal of approval, directing the State Printer to put in type and print the series of text-books then in use in the State ; the illustrations were presumed to present no difficulty, and when, after considerable discussion, some one ventured to suggest the obstacle of the United States copyright laws, there was at once an indignant assertion of ultra State rights and for a time a new rebellion seemed imminent, right there.

In this connection it may be proper to explain the motive of State Printers in lobbying for the passage of these textbook bills ; the fact is that these officials are the only persons interested in these bills, and they have the same pecuniary interest in State publications that private publishers have in their own books : in States where the State Printer is simply a contractor the interest is obvious : where, as in California, he is a salaried officer, the average honest farmer may not see it so clearly. In the first place, the volume of the business is grossly exaggerated in the public mind, and the State Printer, who knows no more about it than other people, shares in the illusion ; visions of an immense establishment rivalling the Congressional Printing Office rise in his mind, with innumerable "appointments" of printers, porters, clerks and storekeepers at his disposal. Now "patronage" is the legitimate medium of exchange in political transactions ; with "appointments" all political debts may be paid, and political security and advancement insured ; the disposal of "appointments" in the end brings money, or something which may be preferred to money — actual cash can always be had if desired — to the person who controls them. But in addition to this well-understood source of revenue, the expenditure of large sums in the purchase of "plant" and "stock" always may, and in California, at least, generally does, bring secret commissions to the officer awarding the contracts ; when you find a State Printer working for these bills — and no one else ever does work for them — you may know that he has these personal profits in mind. When, as in California, the State Printer in an official report deliberately and outrageously understates the cost, in order to induce the State to go into the scheme, the conclusion of intended exploitation of the funds is well-nigh irresistible ; for example :

In his report of January 1883, State Printer Ayres states (see *ante* pp. 9, 10, 11) that he knew exactly what "plant" he needed and all he wanted, and that it was

"1 Mammoth Edition Bindery,
1 Hoe Perfection Press,
A little type — 'a mere trifle' to sort up."

In his Report, *after he had got his appropriation*, he states:

"I deemed it necessary, in order to carry out the provisions of this Act satisfactorily and intelligently, to proceed East and make a careful examination of the most improved machinery in use in the large Eastern establishments! I did so."

Yes, and besides that, which he is careful *not* to state in his official report, he extended his trip to *Europe* and traveled all over that interesting part of the world, under the pretense of hunting for "improved machinery," and all the expense of his agreeable vacation was paid for from the California State school-book fund!* We do things in a breezy way in California.

To conclude this branch of the subject in this place, the following quotations from subsequent State Printers' Reports will be found interesting, as showing the State Printer's unceasing and unquenchable thirst for "appropriations" when once he has been permitted to set up a State school-book publishing business.

In 1883, all he needed was "a mere trifle."

In 1885, he felt that he *should* have a *quarter of a million*, but was induced to try to "begin" with \$150,000.

In 1886,† he says (the same Ayres):

This involved an almost entire reorganization of the establishment. A new boiler and a new engine of greater capacity than was before needed were made to replace the old

* The official expense bill of the State Printer's European trip is not at hand. *The Chronicle* (Feb. 18, 1886) gives the amount as \$606.50.

† Report of Sept. 1, 1868.

ones; an extension of the engine building was made in which to house the new boiler. The floors of the lower story were let down the entire length of the building; * * * artificial stone flooring was substituted for wood; the foundations for the large presses were set deep; * * * the third story of the building * * * was fitted up at great expense for a bindery; the west half of the lower floor * * * was turned into an electrotyping room; all these extensive and radical changes involved a large expenditure: * * the above expenses occurred mainly on account of the new departure in printing the school books; * * * it was necessary to renew the body types of the office * * *. I have been compelled to run the force of this department on full time notwithstanding there was a great deal of waiting caused by the necessary slowness of the preparatory work; competent electrotypers are scarce, and to secure such they must be kept under continuous salary, whether there is a press of work or the contrary; * * * I would recommend the building of fire-proof vaults; * * * the time will soon come when, in order to meet the growing necessities of the text-book work, the State will be compelled to make an extensive addition to the building; * * * the present offices of the Superintendent are altogether inadequate to his needs * *

(Signed), James J. Ayres,

Superintendent of State Printing.

Exit Ayres; enter Shoaf — a new State Printer. *He* says (Report of 1888):

In assuming my office, I found that the text-book business had not been fully established, and was encumbered with numerous difficulties; * * * the last Legislature passed an act appropriating \$10,000 to build a fire-proof warehouse for the storage of text-books; * * * the result * * shows that the cost of manufacturing the State text-books, as given by my predecessor, J. J. Ayres * * * falls short of the actual expenditure. “[Well, yes, indeed it did!] * * *” No percentage was added * * * for contingent expenses, such as wood and coal, repairs to machinery, engineer’s supplies, paints, oils, etc., freight and drayage, telephone, gas, ice, water, insurance, plumbing, express, lumber, nor for the wages of employees not directly employed in the manufacture of the books, such as foreman, assistant foremen, machinists, porters, time keeper, messen-

gers, carpenter, book-keeper, watchman, porter to pack books, etc., nor for the necessary waste of material. * * *

(Signed), P. L. SHOAF,
Superintendent of State Printing.

Shoaf promised to try and estimate enough, in future, but political changes cut short his career, after three months, and J. D. Young became and continues (until after election) State Printer.

The State of California is too rich to be bankrupted by the text-book business, but how long could any private publisher last, with such management?

Superintendent Young says (Report of 1888) :

Since I took charge of the office, Oct. 1, 1887, much has been done in the way of improvement: * * * Your excellency found the floor of the bindery in a dangerous condition; [This was the floor Ayres fixed—Report of 1886, above.] * * * the unsightly coal shed was removed and replaced; * * * by changing some partitions more room has been gained; the elevator * * * is altogether unfitted for the work required of it; * * * a new one * * * should be obtained; * * * the office should also be provided with a fire-escape; * * * the supply of type in the office is too small; * * * it is all badly worn * * * the font * * * purchased two or three years ago [Ayres's Report, 1885, above.] is very imperfect and unsatisfactory; *the whole outfit of book* * * * *department should be sold and a new one provided*; another press, capable of more speed, * * * is badly needed.

After a few weeks' work upon the text-books, I became satisfied that the price at which they were being sold was much less than the cost of manufacture; * * * the loss on books sold below cost was about \$11,000. * * * The State Series of books received a severe "black eye," so to speak, because * * * of being printed on paper of a poor quality, and bound in an unsubstantial manner; the volumes fall apart after very little use, and the complaint against them was universal; * * * I have had the interior of the bindery remodeled * * * but it is still too

small for our uses ; * * * we have added somewhat to the machinery ; * * * the inking machine * * * has broken down, and is too small for our use.

(Signed), J. D. YOUNG,
Superintendent of State Printing.

A little later, Superintendent Young goes at it again. He says (Supplementary Report, Dec. 28, 1888) :

The office needs another press very badly, and, in fact, we cannot do without it ; * * * I fear we will be unable to issue the Elementary Grammar and Physiology in time for the next school year ; the appropriation for the support of the State Printing Department is nearly exhausted. [This was six months before the close of the fiscal year ; there had been a similar deficiency two years previous.] * * * The inking machine * * * broke down again last week ; * * * I will have to ask the Legislature for an appropriation of \$65,000 to carry the Department through until next July. * * * The Geographies cannot be issued until more people can be employed in the bindery, and that cannot be done without an addition to the building ; I think about \$6,500 will pay for an addition on the west side. * * *

J. D. YOUNG,
Superintendent of State Printing.

This is the last report ; what new necessities the one now nearly due will disclose it would require a very lively imagination to anticipate.

In the light of these official documents, it seems astounding that such a scheme could have been worked through the Legislature ; nothing but the excited condition of the public mind, described at some length in the opening pages of this history, with the resulting reckless and venal character of the Legislature, can possibly account for it ; there were not wanting thoughtful men who foretold the progress of the scheme with great accuracy, and the teachers of the State were substantially unanimous in their opposition ; but no words of warning were heeded ; the State Printer

had the ear of the Legislative committees; the Sacramento papers, scenting the prospect of new fields of exploitation about the capital, vigorously denounced all who ventured to raise their voices against it as "the paid tools of the Book Ring," and all went merrily on. The operation was very simple; the one honest proponent of the scheme among the teachers was invited to Sacramento—coming in his dual capacity of anti-monopolist teacher and an officer of the Knights of Labor—and regaled the committees with "estimates" which he doubtless believed correct, but whose character may be imagined when it is stated that they were so low as to make even State Printer Ayres's first official estimates seem startlingly high; the State Printer astutely worked the enthusiasm of his one honest co-laborer for all it was worth; the newly-elected Superintendent of Public Instruction—an honorable gentleman, totally ignorant of any business—brought the weight of his official position to bear, and a report was brought in, recommending the submission of the necessary amendment to the Constitution to the people.

At this stage of the proceedings, the various publishing houses interested in the California trade state that they were approached by persons assuming to represent influential members of the Legislature, and urged to "take hold and stop the thing"; various sums were mentioned as likely to be sufficient for the purpose, ranging from \$1,500 to \$5,000. The publishers state that they believed these propositions to be fully authorized by those in whose behalf they were made, but that they were promptly and indignantly refused. They state, and it is believed with truth, that they did not even send an agent or representative of any kind to the Legislature, or raise a hand or spend

a dollar to interfere with the scheme, even by submitting (as would have been entirely proper) the facts regarding the actual cost, difficulties and risk, inseparable from the publications of books whether by State or by private persons ; the very great difficulty of procuring acceptable manuscripts, such as, when published, would stand the test of the school-room and prove satisfactory and useful to teachers and pupils ; the inevitable necessity of constant revisions and changes, caused by the progress in science and knowledge ; the very small volume of the business, as compared with the popular estimate, and the very reasonable profits possible under the very active competition which has always existed in the business ; and the dangers attending any artificial system of distribution, which was certain, in some form, to cost the people sums vastly greater than those paid to the retail dealers for their labor and risk in conveying the books to the pupils. They sat still and did nothing. *

The reasons which they assigned for their course, when urged by leading teachers to actively oppose the scheme, were, in brief, as follows: 1st. They did not believe that so wild a scheme could possibly command the necessary two-thirds vote of both houses of the Legislature, required to propose a constitutional amendment. 2d. The men who were really pushing the matter were working in their own interest, and no matter what arguments were brought to bear, would certainly not desist unless bought off, which the publishers would not do. 3d. The temper of the times was such that no cool, dispassionate consideration of such a question was possible ; the "boodle men," posing as "anti-monopolists," had the ear of the people, and very

* See statement of a publisher's agent in *Overland Monthly*, July, 1888.

few, even of the honest portion of the Legislature, could easily be got to place themselves in the way of what seemed to be a genuine popular movement ; 4th, and perhaps principally, they believed that if the State should go into the business the resulting experience would be of a kind which would forever deter any other community from engaging in it—in all of which the publishers showed their usual sagacity.

But words of warning were not wanting : *The Examiner*, the leading Democratic paper of the State, said Jan. 25, 1883 :

“At every session of the Legislature some plausible scheme for spending public money is broached. Its advocates always show that it is a mystery how the State has got along without it, and generally they succeed in persuading the legislators that it is an absolute necessity. * * * * This year it is a scheme to put the State into the publishing business on a larger scale than at present. Surely much too great a sum is already expended in the printing of a mass of worthless Reports and other trashy stuff which nobody reads. Fortunately, the Constitution puts a quietus on the text-book scheme, and the State is saved from this costly folly.”

But even the “Constitution” did not save it.

The leading Republican paper of the State, *The Chronicle*, said, March 1, 1883 :

“At nearly every session of the Legislature, the question of school text-books comes up in one shape or another ; this year it is on the proposal that the State shall itself enter into the market, as a competitor with private enterprise, in the compilation, printing, and distribution of a series of school books, to be uniform throughout the State, and supplied at cost. The Public Printer, being applied to for a statement of the probable expense of such a scheme, encourages the enterprise with a scale of prices that compares as follows with the present scale :

BOOKS.	STATE COST. CENTS.	PRESENT COST. CENTS.
Speller, each	8½	18
First Reader, each	9¼	20
Second Reader, each	18	50
Third Reader, each	24½	90
Arithmetic, each	28¼	\$1.00
Grammar, each	20¼	1.05
History, each	29½	1.25
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	\$1.38½	\$5.08
		1.38½
		<hr/>

Difference in favor of State work \$3.69½

“Something is said further along in the Public Printer’s very curious report on the subject of Geographies, but we need not lumber this article with that. Enough is shown above to convince any one who has a practical knowledge of the cost of ink, paper, composition, press work and binding that the exhibit on the side of the proposed State enterprise is ridiculous.”*

The editor then goes on to make some estimates of his own, and figures that what the State Printer proposed to do for a comparatively small sum would in reality involve the State in an expenditure of at least \$172,000; but even this writer could not foresee the shocking truth that after sinking over three-quarters of a million of dollars in the enterprise it would still be obliged, to save itself, as will appear later, to sell its worthless books at positively higher prices than private publishers charge for their latest and best publications.

The article concludes as follows:

“We have said enough on this subject to convince any

*The actual retail prices at which the set of State books, so far as published, is sold is \$4.40. The retail price of privately published corresponding books is \$4.94, making an apparent saving of 54 cents on the set of books; but the cost of State books, as given by State Printer, takes no account of the interest on an investment of over \$800,000; when this is added, the present prices of books show a positive loss to the State, which, as stated in the text, to save itself, would be obliged to sell its productions at prices considerably higher than those charged by private publishers for corresponding books.

one at all familiar with the printing and binding of books that the figures of the Public Printer are utterly fallacious and untrustworthy. * * * The scheme of amending an important section of the Constitution under the mask that it will save so much money to the State as is pretended has the look of a job on its face, and should be explained, exposed and understood ; this is what we have herein done ; and now that it is done, members of the Legislature cannot excuse themselves for an attempt to turn the State Printing Office into a great nest of politicians, seeking to make it a political machine in elections, on the pretext that it will work a great saving of money, or a great benefit to the cause of education. Whatever lies in that direction supplies the enemies of our public-school system with weapons to undermine and overthrow it."

Under the laws of the State of California, the County School Superintendents of the State meet as a body at the call of the State Superintendent, usually in biennial sessions. This is an official meeting, held at the expense of the public, with the avowed object of discussing questions affecting the public schools and making recommendations to the Legislature. This assembly is an official body, elected by the same constituencies that elect members of the Legislature and is certainly more competent than any Legislature to judge of such a question as that of State publication of text-books. At the biennial session of this body in December, 1882, just previous to the meeting of the Legislature of 1883, the subject was brought up for discussion, in view of the late declaration of one political party in its favor, and the subsequent limited discussion in the public press. The calling of the roll, alphabetically, for opinions showed the Superintendents to be practically unanimous in their opposition to State publication, and a committee of five of the ablest Superintendents, representing the populous counties of Sonoma, Los Angeles, San Mateo, Contra Costa, and Tehama, was raised to prepare a

report on the subject, to be laid, as intended by law, before the Legislature. Two days later the committee presented the following report, which was unanimously adopted by the official State Convention of County Superintendents :

REPORT.

UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED BY THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS, IN CONVENTION ASSEMBLED, IN PURSUANCE OF SECTION 1,532, POLITICAL CODE, AT SAN FRANCISCO, DEC. 27, 28 and 29, 1882.

To the Convention of County School Superintendents :

Your committee to whom was entrusted the duty of formulating the sense of the convention in regard to school text-books, as evinced in this discussion of yesterday on that subject, respectfully report as follows :

Three questions are involved in the discussion :

First.—Should the State furnish the books free ?

As to this we decidedly believe *not*, for the reasons—

1. The great waste by pupils which would result. What this would be may be judged by the great waste of the stationery now furnished by the State as compared with similar articles furnished by the parents.

2. The cost of care, distribution and accounting. The State cannot possibly do this work so cheaply or conveniently to the public as it is now done by retail dealers.

3. This would require the books to be kept with other school property in the schoolhouses or at the homes of the trustees during vacations. The books should be accessible to the pupils at all times. There would be great waste and loss of books under the management of the average trustees. This is shown by the present great loss of school library books.

4. The people are willing to buy the necessary school books for the use of their children, and we believe that it is positively better that the parents should pay directly, each for himself, so much of the cost of the child's education. Books for indigent children are now provided by the State. We see no reason for buying the books for others which is not an equally good reason for buying their clothes or food. It is a step in the direction of leading shiftless peo-

ple to expect general support from the State, a step in the direction of communism.

5. The people will bear only a certain amount of taxation for school purposes. We believe it unwise to increase the apparent amount by paying from the public funds any expenses which parents now willingly pay out of their own pockets. All the money that can be raised is needed for the extension of school terms, the provision of better buildings and appliances, and the payment of teachers' wages.

Second.—Should the State furnish the books at cost?

To this we answer no, for the reason that it is practically impossible for the State to determine what the cost of a school book is. The cost of school books to private publishers and dealers includes not only cost of the plates, paper and binding, but also all sums paid to authors, all sums expended on unprofitable publications, on freights, clerk hire, insurance, losses in trade, in fact of all the expenses of their business, together with capital invested, and sufficient additional to replace the first cost of plates before the books become antiquated and unsalable; also of the services of all who necessarily handle the books during their progress to the hands of the pupil. This cost practically cannot be computed, and if it could be, under State management, would certainly make the books more expensive than now. The annual profits on school books to retailers, at present, in California, probably do not exceed \$12,000 or \$15,000. The State certainly cannot distribute the books for this money; and even if there were the possibility of a small saving, it would not justify the State in attacking the trade of the small book stores, which are themselves great educational influences which ought to be encouraged, and not crippled.

Third.—Should the State publish its own text-books?

As this branch of the subject has been largely discussed of late, we have given it considerable attention.

It has been claimed that the State should publish the reading and other principal text-books used in the public schools. This would probably include Readers, Spellers, Geographies and Arithmetics. The sale of United States Histories is too small to render it an object; and upon the subject of grammar there is too much difference of opinion. It may be added that Geographies would also doubtless have to be excluded, as they are peculiarly difficult to prepare and print, and are necessarily subject to continual revision.

For the purpose of investigation, however, we have included these four subjects.

The first question to be considered is the volume of business. It is not claimed that we should get better books by State publication, but that we should save money.

To find out how much we can save, we must first find how much we now pay.

According to the report of the Superintendent of Schools of San Francisco for 1880, there were enrolled in May of that year, the following number of pupils in the respective grades: First grade, 875; second grade, 1,447; third grade, 1,899; fourth grade, 2,857; fifth grade, 3,621; sixth grade, 4,038; seventh grade, 4,548; eighth grade, 9,721.

The cost, at contract retail prices, for all the Readers, Spellers, Geographies and Arithmetics which would be required in one year by that number of pupils, according to the course of study in the San Francisco schools, if each pupil should buy a new book, would be \$19,069.70. In fact, however, they do not all purchase new books; great numbers of books are handed down from one child to another, or were used by the same child in previous grades. Probably not more than half of the books required would be purchased new in each year. For the purposes of the discussion, however, we assume that one-third of the books only are left over, and two-thirds purchased new. This would make the cost of the books, at contract retail prices, \$12,713.14. The sum actually paid to the publishers by the wholesale dealers for these books, and for which the State could also purchase them if it was desired to distribute them through its own machinery, would be \$8,366.

The total number of census children in the State for 1880 was 213,596; census children in San Francisco, 58,492; number in State, 3.65 times that in the city.

Assuming that the consumption of these books would be the same *per capita* of census children in the State as in the city — which it would not be, for more are used in the city — we have $\$8,366 \times 3.65 = \$30,535.90$ as the net amount which the State could purchase all the Readers, Spellers, Geographies and Arithmetics required for one year by the pupils at the public schools of the State. The freight on such a quantity of books from the East would be from \$2,500 to \$3,000.

Your committee has not had time to make further estimates.

The records of sales of some of the books largely used

in the State, taken from the books of the wholesale houses of the city, were shown to your committee, and indicate substantially the same result. Your committee, however, have not had time to verify them, and do not include them in this report. They can doubtless be seen by any person interested, and of course furnish the best and most reliable data on this subject.

From all the information which your committee have been able to gather, however, we feel justified in assuming that all the Readers, Spellers, Geographies and Arithmetics which would be required in one year for the public schools of this State could be purchased by the State and laid down in Sacramento or San Francisco for not to exceed \$40,000. We also believe, from some estimates which we have seen made by responsible printers and binders of San Francisco, that the same books could be manufactured from plates owned by the State for about half that sum.

The question then is, Can the State pay its authors, and manufacture its plates out of the \$20,000 a year now probably paid to publishers and transportation companies above actual cost of manufacture, and still probably save enough to justify the experiment?

These figures are so absurdly small, as compared with the popular estimate of the amount paid for these books, and as compared, we may say, with our own estimates when we began this investigation, that we are not inclined to pursue the subject further. We do not believe the people of the State will desire to change the Constitution for the purpose of allowing the Legislature to engage in any such experiment for the purpose of trying to save such a trifling sum.

But these are the figures, and they seem to indicate just this result. There seems to be paid for these books, to the publishers and transportation companies, about \$40,000. The work of distribution is performed by the wholesale and retail dealers, the former receiving for their services some \$5,000 or \$6,000, and the latter some \$11,000 or \$12,000, in return for which they count, pack, bill and distribute the books, collect and transmit the money, and pay the losses from bad debts. We do not believe that the State could do the same work for three times the money.

As, however, there may be some well-meaning people who are still unconvinced, we will pursue the subject a little further.

EXPENSES OF AUTHORSHIP.

The usual compensation of authors of school books is 10 per cent. on the list price, which is 25 per cent. higher than that assumed above in estimating the amount now received by publishers ; and the State ought not to, and unless the universal experience of mankind misleads us, *would* not, seek to deal less liberally with its authors than is the custom of private publishers. On the supposition, therefore, that the annual sale of books would be \$40,000 at net prices, equivalent to \$50,000 at list prices, there would be either an annual payment of \$5,000 to authors, or the immediate payment of such a gross sum as would be its equivalent. This disposes of one-fourth of the proposed saving of \$20,000, except upon the supposition that the State accepts the services of some of the multitude of incompetent men who are unable to secure private publishers of their books, and will therefore seek to become authors for the State on almost any terms, or succeeds in browbeating some competent man into accepting less than the usual and fair remuneration.

EXPENSE OF PLATES.

School books, as now manufactured, are models of good printing. The plates must be prepared from fresh, new type, with which the State Printing Office must be stocked. The very best compositors and foremen must be employed. But the chief difficulty will be in the illustrations. The school Readers now published by the leading houses are gems of art. The books which, as First and Second Readers, are now retailed for 25 and 50 cents would, if put up in flaming covers and sold as holiday books, retail for from one to two dollars. They engage the services of the very best artists and the very best engravers in the land. The series of Readers now in use in San Francisco contains two hundred and thirty-five illustrations ; the list of artists contains the names of the best artists in America ; the work of the engravers is equally creditable ; the artistic knowledge and feeling required to originally plan the illustrations before the detailed work is referred to the artists at all is of a very high order, and probably not found attached to any State printing office in America ; the Readers and Geographies of other publishers are equally good ; the public taste and educational requirements alike demand the very best effects attainable in this department, and rival

publishers continually vie with each other in their efforts to keep pace with this demand.

It will certainly not be proposed that the State of California should prepare text-books for its children inferior to those supplied by private enterprise to the children of other States. Neither public opinion nor the real interests of our schools would permit it. If any books be published by the State, they must be the best books possible. A low estimate for a private publisher to pay to artists and engravers for the two hundred and thirty-five engravings of the series alluded to would be \$60 each, exclusive of the services of the skilled person in charge of the general mechanical and artistic execution. Here would be an investment of some \$15,000 for a single item. If done for the State it would unquestionably reach \$20,000. If it be said that the State need not make such fine books, or that this care, pains and expense are not necessary to secure it, it must be replied that the public certainly will require such books and will prefer to pay what is necessary to secure them ; and that private enterprise can find no way to attain these results *except* by just such pains and expense. A Californian publishing house, now preparing a series of Readers, finds it necessary and economical to maintain a competent gentleman constantly in the East for the sole purpose of superintending their illustrations. Neither artists nor engravers competent to do such work can be found on this coast, for the reason that there is no demand for their services. The State would be compelled to send East. Work of this kind cannot be done by contract ; the result must be patiently worked out at whatever expense by an intelligent, responsible head. And in doing this, even under the very best management, large sums are always wasted in work which is not acceptable when done, and which the publisher who has paid for it finds it necessary to throw away. To what sums under "State" management this would amount can only be conjectured. The time required by a private publishing house for the production of a series of Readers is from two to five years, during all of which time the careful attention of the most competent and experienced men is required, extending to the minutest detail. The State certainly is not likely to get on with less, or less skillful assistance. If it does, the results will be proportionately poor. All these salaries and expenses are to be charged to the account of the "manufacture of the plates." To one not familiar with

the business they may seem unnecessary, but they are certainly incurred by *all private* publishers, who certainly would *not* incur them if they could be avoided.

The same remarks apply to the preparation of Geographies and, in a less degree, to Arithmetics and Spellers.

The capital invested by a private publishing house, situated at the East, in the midst of all the best facilities for doing such work, in the manufacture of a series of Readers, Geographies, Arithmetics and Spellers, would certainly not be less than \$100,000.

How much it would cost the State of California, 3,000 miles from the point where the most difficult and expensive part of the work must be done, with the management in the hands of inexperienced men, may be guessed at, but cannot be estimated.

On inquiry, we have learned that a private publishing house, in preparing a series of school books, *throws more money away in trials and experiments, which come to nothing, than they put into the actual books as they finally appear.* What would be the experience of the State?

EXPENSE OF MANUFACTURING THE BOOKS — PRINTING AND BINDING.

This work will require peculiar and expensive presses, suitable for printing fine illustrated books, the very best pressmen, and the very best paper. It would also require the equipment of a bindery and the employment of a force of binders.

If done by contract, it would involve a profit to the contractor, and the risk of bad work. There is not more than one, if there is any, establishment on this coast with facilities for doing the work, and the amount of work is not enough to induce others to prepare themselves, and here would be practically a "monopoly" of the contract, which is what we are all fighting against.

Another point to be considered is the danger of unsatisfactory books after all our efforts. It is a common, and perhaps very natural, error to suppose that almost any well-educated person can prepare a good text-book. On the contrary, there is hardly any more difficult literary task, or one requiring greater judgment, patience and skill. Let any one attempt to arrange the lessons of a series of Readers, or the examples in the series of Arithmetics, so that each shall easily follow what has been passed, and properly

prepare the pupil for what is to follow, and he will have a slight conception of only one of the difficulties to be encountered. All teachers appreciate this, and can well understand the annoyance, waste of time, and unsatisfactory results from the use of poorly-graded, ill-arranged or unsatisfactory text-books. It is not likely that any school board would agree, in advance of their publication, to use the books of any private publisher, no matter how honest or how capable ; and yet an able man who thoroughly understands his business is certainly much more likely to secure good authors and have the books properly prepared than the inexperienced agents of any State, appointed, as they certainly would be, by political influence. Yet it must not be forgotten that the books prepared by the State must be used at least for a time, whether good or bad. When new, like all other new school books, they are certain to contain many errors and omissions, and to require correction, modification and new editions ; and the people must bear the expense, and the party in power endure the scandal. If found finally bad, and, in the course of time in any event, there will be a desire to supersede them by newer books, which will involve throwing away the old plates and the paying full prices for the new books, in which case there would be no convenient nominal "exchange prices" to be paid in exchange for the old books.

It must also not be forgotten that the proposed measure will involve the immediate general change of *all the books now in use*—most of them among the latest and best books in the market, and just recently adopted and bought by the people—a proceeding which, it seems to us, would be found not only unwise, but unpopular.

In consideration, therefore, of all the above facts, we are constrained to advise against the State undertaking to print, publish, or "provide" any of the school text-books.

[Signed],

C. S. SMYTH, Supt. of Schools, Sonoma Co., Chairman.

MYRON YAGER, Supt. of Schools, Tehama Co.

A. A. BAILEY, Supt. of Schools, Contra Costa Co.

G. P. HARTLEY, Supt. of Schools, San Mateo Co.

J. W. HINTON, Supt. of Schools, Los Angeles Co., Secretary.

This report, convincing as it seems (and which was unanimously adopted) and backed up as it was with an appendix of tables, giving the details of the figures from

which the conclusions of the committee were drawn, was in due time laid before the Legislature, but for reasons already set forth it received no attention whatever. That was not a Legislature to pay attention to figures which did not support what the members were determined to do. It is not probable that it was ever read by a single member. In due time the proposed amendment received the necessary two-thirds vote of both branches of the Legislature and was laid aside, to be voted for by the people in the autumn of 1884. Its adoption by the people, however, in the then state of the public mind, was a foregone conclusion; not that the people themselves knew or cared much about it; probably a majority never heard of it; except from the Sacramento papers, it received almost no mention while passing through the Legislature; most papers mentioned it once, generally unfavorably, and dropped it; had each voter been obliged to write "For" or "Against" the amendment on his ballot, not five in a hundred would ever have voted at all; it would have been defeated, however, in that case, as the more intelligent citizens, so far as they thought of it at all, were opposed to it; but there were several other amendments at the same time; these were designated on the ballots simply by their numbers, and in that way attached to a long ticket, containing a long list of State, Congressional, County and Municipal officers; the County Committees of the various parties printed "For" or "Against," as they saw fit, against each of the amendments, and the electors voted them just as they got them; life was felt to be too short to be spent in reading—much less scratching—tickets a yard long and containing a whole directory of names; whatever was on the tickets went. The public

feeling was such that the County Committees of all parties, believing that any attack on alleged "monopolists" would be popular, printed their tickets "For" the text-book amendment; the teachers generally scratched "For" and inserted "Against"; the public voted straight; in one or two counties (Tuolumne and Tehama) some enterprising teacher got the committees of one or two parties to print the ticket "Against" the text-book amendment and the people voted them just the same; but the general result was the almost unanimous adoption of the amendment by the people in November, 1884.

Before this was accomplished, however, there was yet one more earnest and dignified protest from a competent and intelligent body—the California State Teachers' Association—which, it would seem, ought to have produced some effect. This paper is given below, reprinted from *The Educational Journal* of January, 1887, the only paper in the State which even noticed it!

At the meeting of the Association in December, 1884, the amendment being then before the people to be voted for in November, 1885, the subject was brought up and referred to a committee of eleven of the very strongest educational men in the State. Their names will be found appended to the report, which was unanimously adopted by the Association.

REPORT.

ADOPTED BY THE STATE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION, HELD
IN SAN FRANCISCO, DEC. 26, 27 AND
28, 1883.

Your Committee on State Publication of Text-Books have had the subject under consideration, and beg leave to report as follows:

We find this subject was carefully considered by a committee appointed by the County Superintendents, at their session, a year ago, and ably discussed in a report submitted by them. To that report we invite the attention of all persons who desire to see the points involved presented in detail. From that report, and from other data and statistics which we have examined, but have not had time to properly digest and arrange, we find as follows :

First.—There is now paid to publishers, by wholesale dealers, for School Readers, Spellers, Geographies, Arithmetics, Grammars, and Histories of the United States, to be sold in this State, about \$60,000 per year.

Second.—That the State, if it desired to supply books to pupils at actual cost, could purchase, delivered in Sacramento, all the books on the above subjects required for use in the public schools of this State, for that sum.

Third.—That a private publishing house, working under the pressure of self-interest, with a full corps of trained assistants, would require at least five years' time and an expenditure of at least \$150,000 to prepare the plates of a series of the above books, equal in size, matter, illustrations, paper, binding, and general excellence to those generally used in this State, and the type, presses, and other "plant" necessary to their publication.

Fourth.—That the expense to the State, working in inexperience, without proper facilities, under the possible and probable wastefulness and extravagance of its officials, with the certainty that partisan services, rather than fitness and experience, will control appointments in this service ; with all the disinterested and enlightened public sentiment opposed to the scheme, and the entire press of the party not in power denouncing the methods of its execution, would be at least fifty per cent. greater — certainly not less than \$200,000.

Fifth.—That the annual expense of manufacturing the books, after the first expenses were incurred, would be about \$30,000, exclusive of the expense of the central bureau of publication, which would certainly not be less than that of a private firm engaged in the same business.

Sixth.—That the estimate of the State Printer upon which the legislation for submitting the proposed amendment was founded, is, owing to the want of accessible information regarding the school-book business, defective, erroneous and misleading.

Seventh.—That the preparation of good school text-books

is not, as is often stated, an easy matter for any educated person, but one requiring the greatest skill, judgment, experience and patience.

Eighth.—That comparatively few text-books issued by old and experienced houses give general satisfaction. And that the chances under State publication are still greater, and amount to a very strong probability, that the first attempt, at least, will be crude, unsatisfactory and discreditable; will mortify our State pride, injure our reputation, and impair the efficiency of our schools.

Ninth.—That the imperfections which will certainly appear upon trial in these books will call for new appropriations for amended editions by each succeeding Legislature; and be equally sure to evoke political attack, renewed changes of books, legislative inquiry and public scandal.

Tenth.—That it is particularly dangerous for a State situated like California to stake so great a sum upon the issue of an experiment so doubtful that but one State has ever tried it, and disastrously failed, and especially as this experiment is proposed to be made, not by ordinary legislation, but by a constitutional amendment requiring years for repeal.

Eleventh.—That no State ought to attempt any business which can be successfully managed by private enterprise; and that the surest way to secure the best books at the least cost is to leave, as we now do, the field unrestricted and open to the competition of all the world.

Twelfth.—That the truth of this reasoning appears from the low rates at which publishers now sell their books, paying their authors; preparing the plates; incurring the risks, and still providing our books at an advance of not more than \$25,000 per year upon the actual cost of manufacture after the plates are prepared.

Thirteenth.—That private publishers are enabled to do this because they publish for 50,000,000 of people, while we, after incurring the same or greater preliminary expense, would publish for less than 1,000,000.

Fourteenth.—That in the only State, Minnesota, where any such system has been tried, the result has been disastrous, and the system has been condemned. The Superintendent of the largest county in that State, in a letter addressed to an officer of this association, writes that "not a single State book has been ordered in that county since 1880," that "tabooed books are fast creeping into the schools," and that the scheme is considered "an impractic-

able, unconstitutional, iron-clad failure." The Superintendent of another large county warns the people of California not "to take pattern from us and humbug themselves with such an irrevocable, unrepealable, iron-clad and foolish textbook law."

In view, therefore, of the above findings of fact, your committee respectfully recommend the passage of the following resolution :

Resolved, That in the opinion of this association, the publication of school text-books by this State is inexpedient and impracticable, and will, if attempted, result in great pecuniary loss to the State and expensive and unsatisfactory books for our schools.

[Signed],

JAS. G. KENNEDY, Superintendent Schools, San José.

JAS. DENMAN, Principal Denman School, San Francisco.

F. C. SAWYER, San José.

F. A. BLACKBURN, Prin. Boys' High School, San Francisco.

C. S. SMYTH, Supt. Schools, Sonoma County.

ALBERT LYSER, Cosmopolitan School, San Francisco.

IRA MORE, Prin. Normal School, Los Angeles.*

G. P. HARTLEY, Supt. Schools, San Mateo County.

FRED. M. CAMPBELL, Ex-State Superintendent.

W. W. ANDERSON, Prin. Public Schools, Berkeley.

MARTIN KELLOGG, University of Cal., Berkeley.

JOS. O'CONNOR, Deputy Supt. of Schools, San Francisco.

H. B. NORTON, Vice-Prin. State Normal School, San José.

The opinions of the teachers as set forth in that report are the opinions of the teachers of California to-day ; despite their protests the system was established by the State, and the time has not yet come for any further expression from them ; indeed few of the leading educators of the State are yet willing to publicly set forth their objections to the scheme ; in conversation they express themselves

* Professor More, as a member of the State Board of Education, has since assisted in carrying out a scheme which he thus joined with others in denouncing. This it was only his duty to do, as an officer of the State ; whether more intimate knowledge of the subject has changed his views is not known, but very likely it has, for it is doubtful whether any teacher ever yet lived who would not favor State publication, *if he himself could prepare the books*. Several such instances of conversion have occurred in California, and Professor More may be one of them.

freely enough, but to openly attack the work of the officials who have in their gift, or who are able to influence, the appointments to the leading educational positions in the State, would be premature and Quixotic, until long use and sad experience have thoroughly convinced the public at large of the folly of the plan ; when the proper time comes the educational men will again make themselves heard, and in no uncertain or ineffective manner. A few of these gentlemen have been employed by the State Board in the "compilation" of some of the books ; still others have been freely "consulted" in the matter ; some others hope to be so employed or consulted in the future ; these few men and their special friends must in common gratitude and consistency speak well of what they have helped to do ; but whoever will mingle among the teachers at their large gatherings, or listen to the discussions which frequently spring up in the Teachers' Institutes, can have no doubt of the overwhelming condemnation which is in store for the system when the time comes for the teachers to speak their mind.

Let us now compare the original promises of State Printer Ayres with the results achieved under his scheme—and with the wholesale prices at which the State could probably purchase of private publishers, but avoiding the deceptive and dishonorable habit of State Printers and their friends of comparing an assumed but false *net cost of manufacture* of State books, with the *retail* prices said to be charged by dealers for single books of private publishers :

Legislative Appropriations, 1885.

Act, app. Feb. 26.—	For “compiling” . .	\$20,000
“ “ “	For machinery, material and printing .	150,000
		<hr/>
		\$170,000
Interest on same 5 years, 6 per cent.		51,000

Legislative Appropriations, 1887.

Act, app. Mch. 15.—	Deficiency T.B.Dept.,	\$7,500
“ “ “	Fire-proof warehouse for text-books . .	10,000
“ “ “	For “compiling” . .	15,000
“ “ “	For machinery, material and printing .	165,000
		<hr/>
		197,500
Interest on same 3 years		35,460

Legislative Appropriations, 1889.

Act, app. Mch. 1.—	Salary text-book clerk in State Supt.'s office one year	\$1,600
“ “ “	Same in gen. app. act, two years	3,200
“ “ “ 14.—	For enlarging State Printing Office . .	11,000
“ “ “ 19.—	For copyright and plates of Cookes' Entomology . . .	15,000
“ “ “ 21.—	(Gen. app. act.) For pay of employees, machinery and material, T. B. Dept. .	50,000
		<hr/>
		80,800
Interest on same 1 year		4,848
Value of books in hands of pupils, but thrown away to make room for State books, partly estimated.*		250,000
Interest on \$200,000 of this sum 1 year		12,000
		<hr/>

Grand total of money sunk in the scheme to date	\$801,608
Deduct State Printer's original estimate	32,485.37
	<hr/>
Excess above State Printer's estimate	\$769,122.63

* The total amount of books sold by the State to Dec. 1, 1889, was reported by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, at a meeting of the State Board of Education, Dec. 13, 1889, at \$221,377.68. This was nearly all for “intro-

The annual interest on permanent investment, as per table, but not including interest upon interest, is \$37,050, which sum, plus the interest of whatever additional appropriations the ingenuity of successive State Printers may succeed in wresting from the State, must forever be annually added to the cost of the books as the State Printer will give it.

The following table exhibits the prices of the books of the California State Series, as compared with the original prices promised by State Printer Ayres, and with the prices of similar books issued from private presses; the prices of the State books representing the cost as given by the State Printer, and at which they are sold in Sacramento, and the prices of the private books being those now paid by jobbers and publishers, and, of course, including the publisher's profits :

BOOKS.	ORIGINAL ESTIMATE OF STATE PRINTER.	ACTUAL PRICES CHARGED BY STATE.	PRICE OF SIMILAR BOOK TO WHOLESALE DEALERS.
First Reader, .09 $\frac{1}{4}$		.15	McGuffey's 1st Reader, .12 $\frac{3}{4}$
Second " .18		.33	Harper's 2d " .27
Third " .24 $\frac{1}{4}$		.54	" 5th " .67 $\frac{1}{2}$
Speller, .08 $\frac{1}{8}$		.25	Watson's Speller, .16
Arithmetic, .28 $\frac{3}{4}$	{	Ele. .20	Robinson's 1st Book, .22 $\frac{1}{2}$
		Adv. .42	" Complete, Pt. II., .37 $\frac{1}{2}$
Grammar, .20 $\frac{1}{4}$	{	Ele. .25	Swinton's Elementary, .28 $\frac{1}{2}$
		Adv. .42	Harvey's Grammar, .48 $\frac{3}{4}$
History, .29 $\frac{1}{2}$		.70	Barnes's Brief, .75
	<u>\$1.38 $\frac{1}{2}$</u>	<u>\$3.26</u>	<u>\$3.35 $\frac{1}{2}$</u>

ductory" supplies, displacing an equal number of books then in the hands of the pupils, for which, of course, the State permitted no "exchange allowance," as is the custom of private publishers. This process is not yet completed, and the total given by Superintendent does not include Geographies which were not then published ; while for a few counties which took the State books earliest, some books for second supplies were doubtless included in above sales ; there were not many of these, and the sum estimated is doubtless very near the sum which will finally be wasted in this way.

In this table books of different private series are taken, in order to obtain, in each subject, books which correspond as nearly as possible in size to the books published by the State. The prices given are the current prices which publishers now probably receive from the largest wholesale dealers, and are at any rate exactly five per cent. lower than the rates for the same books paid by all *retail* dealers. As a matter of fact, if the State of California should desire to contract for the same or similar books in one lump from any private publisher, they could be obtained, laid down in Sacramento, for not to exceed \$2.75 per set. In printing, illustrations, binding, and general appearance the State books cannot for a moment compare with those issued from any publishing house. If to the apparent cost of the State books, as appears by the table, there is added the proper proportion of interest on permanent investment, as already shown (page 37), the price of the State set would be increased by over 40 per cent.; the proper method of adding this percentage is to add to the output of each year the interest for that year; exactly what this will be cannot be determined until the introductions are completed, and the regular annual sales, which will be less than at present by about two-thirds, are determined; but it is more likely to exceed 40 per cent. than to fall below it.

The above table does not include Geographies, because that book was not included in the original table of the State Printer. That gentleman, however, although he did not include the Geography in his table, stated, as may be remembered (see page 10), that a Geography corresponding to Monteith's Large (Comprehensive) Geography could be produced in his establishment and sold at 35 cents.

This large book has not appeared yet, but the *Small* (Elementary) Geography is out, and is sold, *not* at a price corresponding to 35 cents for the *large book*, nor even for 35 cents ; —but for 50 cents ; Harper's Introductory Geography, covering substantially the same ground, can be bought by School Boards or dealers freely for 38 cents. (See Publishers' Price-list.)

The above prices of State books, however, are not by any means the prices which the people pay for them. Experience finally proved that neither the prophecy of a State Printer nor even an act of the Legislature could secure the distribution of the books without cost ; and after much deep thinking, it was decided to allow such retail dealers to keep them as would enter into a written agreement to sell them at prices fixed by the State Board, and which were substantially the prices formed by adding the postage on each book to the State price thereof, the dealers' profit being the difference between the cost of postage and the actual sum paid for boxing and freight.

The dealers in the principal towns usually comply with these requirements and keep the books ; in the smaller towns they refuse to do it, and the people are left to get them as they can. The dealers generally refuse to keep them, because they say they cannot afford to pay cash in advance for the books and then sell them on credit in the manner customary in country stores, without a margin to cover interest and losses. The law permits counties to establish "Revolving Funds," with which County Superintendents may buy the books and sell them to the people ; but as this either involves pay for a clerk to keep the office, or else makes it necessary that the people buy books only on days when the Superintendents happen to be in the office, it

has not been found desirable, and few counties have established such fund.

The following are the prices at which, by law, the dealers are permitted to sell State books to the people, as compared with the estimate of State Printer Ayres of the sum which they would have to pay and with the prices at which the publishers of the corresponding books advertise to mail them to any address and to contract with any district in the United States to maintain at book stores within its limits :

BOOKS.	Original Estimate State Printer.	Actual prices paid by the people.	Retail price corresponding books.
First Reader . .	\$0.09 $\frac{1}{4}$	\$0.20	\$0.17
Second Reader . .	.18	.40	.36
Third Reader . .	.24 $\frac{1}{4}$	.65	.90
Speller . . . .	.08 $\frac{1}{8}$	.30	.20
Arithmetic . . .	.28 $\frac{3}{4}$	{ Primary, .25 { Advanced, .50 { Elementary, .30 { Advanced, .50	.30
Grammar . . . .	.20 $\frac{1}{4}$		.50
			.38
			.65
History . . . .	.29 $\frac{1}{2}$	.80	1.00
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	\$1.38 $\frac{1}{8}$	\$3.90	\$4.46
Elementary Geography		.50	.48
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		\$4.40	\$4.94

By these official figures, taking no account of the investment already made by the State and no thought of the vast additional sums certain to be soon demanded by public sentiment to replace with suitable books those which the leading Democratic paper in the State calls "the poorest ever introduced in this State" (*San Francisco Examiner*, October 15, 1887), and of which the leading Republican paper of the State says, "the whole system is an ignominious failure" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, June 24, 1887), and which State Printer Young says were

so poorly made that "they fell apart after very little use" (State Printer's Report, 1888)—the above statement makes an *apparent* saving of 54 cents on the entire set, which may be contrasted with the *promise* of saving \$3.69 per set promised by State Printer Ayres in his initial report of 1883.

How this addition of interest, which is a proper and inevitable charge, and which is an item which certainly exists whether taken account of or not, will affect the figures may be seen as follows:

Detailed statement of books sold by the State to December 1, 1889, as compared with wholesale prices of corresponding books of private publishers:

BOOKS.	Selling Price (and Cost) as given by State Printer.	Publisher's Wholesale Price for Books corresponding in size.
140,614 First Readers	\$21,092.10	\$17,928.27
110,030 Second Readers . . .	36,309.90	29,708.10
73,582 Third Readers . . .	39,734.28	49,667.85
105,040 Spellers	26,260.00	16,806.40
58,179 Primary Arithmetics .	11,635.80	13,090.27
102,243 Advanced Arithmetics .	42,942.06	38,341.12
23,649 Elementary Grammars,	5,912.25	6,739.96
58,049 Advanced Grammars .	24,380.58	28,298.82
35,707 United States Histories,	24,994.90	26,780.25
707,093	\$233,261.87*	\$227,361.04
Add interest on permanent investment to December 1, 1890,	98,460.00	
	\$331,721.87	
Subtract cost private books . .	227,361.04	
Loss to State in three years as compared with purchasing from private publishers . .	\$104,390.84	

* In the official statement of sales, from which this is taken (see *Pacific Educational Journal* for January, 1890, Official Department, Hon. Ira G. Hoitt, State Superintendent Public Instruction, Editor), the amount for each book is not extended and the total sales are given as \$221,377.68; but if the number of books sold is given correctly, the amounts and totals are as given above. Wherever the error lies is of no consequence, as the only object at this time is a comparison of prices on an equal number of books.

It may seem strange that so large a loss to the State should appear on the aggregate sales and a small loss even on the State Printer's figures, and without considering interest, when, if single complete sets are compared, there is an apparent saving to the State of 54 cents. Examination of the above table, however, discloses the fact that *the greatest sales are on the books on which the State loses most.*

The interest on permanent investment to December 1, 1890, is about 42 per cent. upon the total amount of sales to December, 1889. This percentage would be somewhat reduced if it were spread over the additional books sold during the current year, which is not yet known, but it is the proper percentage to add to the cost of the State books per set as given by the State Printer, and it will increase from year to year as interest increases and annual sales diminish.

In this connection it must be understood that the State Printing Office has thus far been printing quantities of books very far in excess of what will be the permanent requirements of the State. To this date it has been nearly all "introductory work." There were, of course, no State books in use to begin with, and every pupil in the State had to be supplied with the new books. These books were not all introduced at once, as many counties had contracts with publishers which did not expire until 1888. When the schools have once been fully supplied with the new books, the annual sales will at once fall off to about one-third of the total number of books in use at one time and, in the case of the larger and more expensive books, of less than that, and this reduced and permanent output of books must bear all the burden of the enormous interest charge. The above completes the exhibit of the financial side of

this monstrous folly; astonishing as it is, it would be well for the State if this were the worst of it. The great evil of the business, however, is on the educational side, in the injury inflicted on the schools by foisting upon them, by the strong arm of the law, at great cost, a series of books which no reputable publishing house would ever think of offering to the public and which, with all their alleged influence, they could never get adopted if they did; this evil is less tangible than the financial loss and will be less patent to the public mind, but it is the greatest evil and the one especially felt by the teachers, which was foretold by them when the scheme was first broached and which will finally arouse them to the complete overthrow of the system.

For reasons already stated (page 36) it is not yet time to expect any such outspoken denunciation of the books or the system as is freely given by the educators of California in private conversation, but occasionally statements appear which show the current of opinion.

The following expressions of opinion have been hitherto published in various places and are collected here simply as "straws" showing the drift of public opinion. Some of them appeared at the time when only the Readers had appeared and so referred only to those books :

FROM THE SAN FRANCISCO "CHRONICLE" (REPUBLICAN),
JUNE 25, 1887.

THE STATE TEXT-BOOK HUMBUG.

When State Printer Ayres announced in 1883, with a magnificent flourish of trumpets, that the State of California could prepare and sell text-books for the public schools much cheaper than they could be purchased, the CHRONICLE denounced his statements as nonsense and his figures as entirely erroneous and deceptive, insisting that by buying text-books in open market and taking advantage of the

keen competition which existed among their manufacturers, they could be procured at prices with which the State could not possibly compete.

It is scarcely necessary to say that our position was most violently and even rancorously assailed by those who were in favor of the new movement. Suffice it to say, that the delusive figures and statements prepared by State Superintendent Welcker and State Printer Ayres won the day. The Legislature formulated a constitutional amendment on the subject, which the people ignorantly and blindly ratified, and the trouble began.

* * * * *

But the story is, so far, only half told. Welcker's figures represent only the cost to the child or his parents. There is an annex to this which tells the tale of what the people of the State at large will have to pay for this text-book humbug, and these figures demonstrate beyond question that even Welcker's figures are below the actual cost of the books, and that the average cost of every text-book issued by the State Printing Department is 72 cents. Let us tabulate these figures in very brief space, to make the contrast between estimates and reality more striking :

Ayres's estimate (average)	17.99 cents
Welcker's selling price (average)	25.00 cents
Actual cost to State (average)	72.00 cents

These figures of the actual cost are derived from the fact that 165,000 books have been published, and that \$121,068 have been spent, directly or indirectly, in their manufacture.

Comment upon such a state of facts is almost superfluous. The State will be called upon, as it has already been, for increased appropriations for the Printing Department, and where is the end to be? The State must pay, in some way or other, 47 cents for every book published ; for each book costs 72 cents and sells for 25 cents, and each has to be paid for. It would be interesting to know whether the Arithmetics prepared by the State Printing Department contain such an example as this, for instance : "If the State pays 72 cents for this Arithmetic and sells it to John Jones for 25 cents, how much additional tax will John Jones's father have to pay to make the State even on the text-book humbug?"

The whole scheme is a grievous and costly error, based upon a mistaken calculation and a badly-educated public sentiment, and the sooner steps are taken to do away with

the whole system the better and cheaper will it be the for State. A government has no business to enter into competition with individuals in matters of this kind, for the history of such attempts shows them to have been uniformly failures.

FROM THE SAN FRANCISCO "EXAMINER" (DEMOCRATIC),
APRIL 15, 1887.

The first consideration is whether the books about to be used in the public schools are superior in quality to those now in use. Experienced educators have described them as "trash," and do not hesitate to charge the State Board of Education with the direct cause of forcing upon the pupils of the schools in this State a series of text-books of a quality far below the requirements.

WHAT WAS CONTEMPLATED.

The State appropriated about \$350,000 for the purchase of manuscript for the different text-books and for their publication. The law contemplated that the Board should advertise for manuscript for the Readers, Spellers, Geography, etc., and thereby invite the best educational and literary talent to compete for the sum offered for such work.

If the members had considered and consulted the public interest, they would have executed the intent and purpose of the law. But instead of doing their duty toward the people, they first advertised for manuscript, and then, without taking action, turned a "summersault" and appropriated to themselves certain amounts of money with which to purchase and compile material for the text-books.

For instance, the Principal of the State Normal School in Los Angeles, and a member of the State Board of Education, was allowed \$3,000 with which to compile a text-book on arithmetic. His duties as Principal of the Normal School were arduous and required all his time and attention, and it could, therefore, not be expected from him to devote any time to the work of carefully selecting the best material for the books.

The Principal of the Normal School at San José, and another member of the Board, was voted a sum of money to compile the text-books on grammar, and the same reasons as given above hold good for his shortcomings in providing the public with superior books.

THE POOREST EVER INTRODUCED.

Even the State Superintendent was allowed \$3,000 to procure material for books on geography, and it has been demonstrated by his own acts that his time should be occupied entirely with his official duties as Superintendent.

Instead of going into open market for the manuscript for the text-books and thereby inviting competition and obtaining a superior quality of material, the members of the State Board of Education voted themselves large amounts of money and then "peddled" the work out to the lowest bidders without regard to quality. The result was that the text-books, as now prepared, are the poorest ever introduced in the Public School Department of this State.

FROM EX-STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS HON. F. M. CAMPBELL, IN "OVERLAND MONTHLY," JULY, 1888.

* * * * *

As I have said, the adoption of a constitutional amendment providing for State publication has not changed my views concerning the theory of it. On the contrary, in the light of our very brief experience, much of the foregoing* reads like prophecy. For example, we said in 3 and 4 that a private publishing house, to do this work, would require an expenditure of at least \$150,000, but that it would cost the State much more — say \$200,000. In point of fact, the sum of \$367,500 has already been appropriated.

In 6 we said "the estimate of the State Printer, upon which the legislation for submitting the proposed amendment was founded, is, owing to the want of accessible information, erroneous and misleading." This has been demonstrated by the fact that the appropriations have already aggregated a sum more than four times as large as that named by him as necessary.

Moreover, at the last meeting of the State Board of Education, held this very week, viz., on Thursday, June 14, it was found necessary to *raise* the price previously fixed at which the books should be sold, and up to now have been sold, to cover their cost. Whether another *re-adjustment* of prices will be found necessary as the actual cost of production shall be still more correctly ascertained, remains to be seen. If not, why not?

* Referring to the Report and resolution adopted by the State Teachers' Association, which Superintendent Campbell had previously quoted in full. For the Report in full, see *ante* page 32.

The complaints with which the papers of San Francisco teemed when the books first appeared, as to their mechanical imperfections; the "investigations" which the papers of the State reported concerning some \$20,000 charged to the book fund, which should have been charged to some other fund, or vice versa, I have forgotten which; the "indignation meetings" held in San Francisco, and participated in by employees of the State Printing Office at Sacramento (and on the pay-roll for that very time), to compel the State Superintendent to expend money in the printing and binding of books in large excess of the numbers he deemed necessary, simply because the money was available and could be used in giving employment to people who needed it* — these were not, of course, the specific things had in mind by the committee when Nos. 8 and 9 were penned, but they are in the general direction of what is therein predicted; and I will further add that the books are "unsatisfactory," vastly inferior to those now in use. Without specifying further, I repeat in general terms that in the light of our very brief experience, much of the committee's report reads like prophecy. I have been engaged continuously in educational work for thirty years in California. I am proud of the progress made and of California's educational status, and I am proud, too, that it has been recognized to the extent of having the great National Educational Association of the United States cross the continent to hold here its session of 1888; but I am *not* proud, and I freely confess it, to see our educational system made to fly as the tail to the State Printer's kite.

But, leaving our own special case, and considering the subject of State publication of school books as a general proposition, there are many objections which present themselves in addition to those named in the foregoing committee's report. Of these I shall have space to suggest for consideration but a few:

1. There are in this country a few good writers of school books, each in his specialty: as Swinton, Steele, Rickoff, Swett and others. Now, I would not, as a school officer, agree in advance of its production to adopt for use in the schools any book which either of them might write, much less to use them for an indefinite time. State publication compels us to do this.

* The Sacramento and San Francisco papers for days teemed with this subject, which, like many other phases of the matter, has been omitted for want of space.

2. I know it to be impossible to construct a series of books which shall be equally adapted for the scattered, ungraded schools of a county, say like Modoc, and the thoroughly graded schools of a city. State publications presume to do this.

3. The best text-books are the work of the brightest and best minds of specialists in the various departments, and their finished work must go into competition for manufacture by publishing houses, which in these days of wonderful progress in school appliances can afford to invest their money in only superior work ; and finally, the books of the various houses must compete and be submitted to professional judgment. All this State publication ignores.

4. The professional judgment of those responsible for the efficiency of the schools and the progress of the pupils of any particular jurisdiction is entirely ignored by State publication. What is prepared, whether good, bad, or indifferent, must be taken, and what is worse, must be used for an indefinite period.

5. It is not the policy of the State to come into competition with its individual citizens in manufactures of any kind, either by the utilization of prison labor, or by the establishment of State manufactories. If the State were to change its policy in this respect it would seem that it should begin in some department which is purely mechanical, and in which machinery can do the larger part of the work. In the making of *good* books, the best, the really valuable part, the sweet kernel, is brain work.

6. State publication will give cheaper books it is claimed. Well, perhaps so, for even that remains to be seen. Somebody else invests the money for the making of the books as heretofore supplied, and the people of the State have paid to them a slight advance on the cost for the making of them, and a slight profit to their neighbors and friends of the book-stores for handling them and keeping a supply for their use as needed.

By State publication the people of the State invest the money for *making* the books, and then have to buy them besides. The good people of California have already invested, as has been said, \$367,500 as a capital and a plant for making some books, and when they are made, the same people must buy the books which they have just made. Why, the annual interest on \$367,500 at 7 per cent. is \$25,725. The State books may each be sold for a few cents less than the others, but they are not so valuable by

much more than the difference. Here in Oakland, at the opening of the school next July, all the books now in use in reading, spelling, arithmetic, grammar, and history must be *thrown away*, and books in those branches in every way inferior to those in use must be bought. No exchange price, let it be understood, by which, under the former system, when a change was made, the old book was taken back at a valuation but little less than its first cost; but they must be thrown away. And all this is claimed to be economy because the people get an inferior book, which they themselves have made, a little cheaper than a better book which some one else has made.

It may be answered that the money paid for books goes into the "Revolving Fund" and is to be used in the manufacture of other books. Everything that revolves *wears out*, and it is hardly possible that a revolving "Fund" will be an exception. It sometimes happens that by centrifugal force a revolving body flies all to pieces. Let us hope that the revolving "Fund" will escape this fate.

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors has taken the other option offered by the law, and will establish no revolving fund. The local dealers will handle the State books.

I am admonished that my allotted space must be quite fully occupied. In conclusion, let me say that I am opposed to the State going into the business of manufacturing furniture, clothing, boots and shoes, cigars or books. That all these things could be bought a bit cheaper (if it were true), would not be an argument with me. I am a protectionist.

(Signed), FRED. M. CAMPBELL.

FROM HON. C. B. STONE, CHAIRMAN CLASSIFICATION AND TEXT-BOOK COMMITTEE, SAN FRANCISCO BOARD OF EDUCATION, IN S. F. "CHRONICLE," MAY 11, 1887.

In an interview had yesterday with Chairman Stone, of the Classification Committee, and his colleague, Mr. Bowie, these gentlemen expressed themselves firm in their intention to defeat any and all jobs in text-books. In the language of Director Stone, "these books are trashy, poorly-compiled and not graded properly, but the Legislature is responsible for them and we are going to give them to the schools. The best way to meet an odious law is to enforce it strictly; then the people will take care of it."

THE STATE SCHOOL BOOKS.

Some time ago we asked for an expression of opinion regarding the State Series of text-books, thinking that in a multitude of counselors there is wisdom. One would discover points of excellence or inferiority which another would overlook, and if we could reach the unbiased opinions of a number of experienced teachers we thought we should be able to give a fair estimate of their absolute value. We have received several communications relating to the First Reader in response to our invitation, some of which are subjoined. We found it necessary to condense some of the papers, but we trust our abstracts give the writers' conclusions, even if we omit the reasoning from which said conclusions were obtained. One teacher sends as follows :

The defects of the State First Reader are obvious and appalling :

1. Its binding is a horrible piece of botchwork. The book in this respect is an outrageous fraud upon the public, and a disgrace to every workman or manager who had a hand in its manufacture. The book falls to pieces upon the slightest provocation, or without provocation at all. In my own school 40 per cent. of the books dissolved and melted away within one week of their first introduction.

2. The book seems to be made of poor material. Both paper and cloth are of inferior quality.

3. The book is poorly illustrated, the cuts are mere parallelograms of blackness in which every object is obscured by a kind of muddy indistinctness.

4. It is unnecessarily large, heavy and cumbersome. The pages of the First Reader are equal in length and breadth to the other Readers of this series ; it should be considerably smaller, that it may not weary the child in holding it. The position of the book in the hand while reading is an illustration of a lever, and it is obvious the further the centre of gravity of the book is from the finger tips the more strength must be exercised to hold it.

Another teacher writes as follows : "As compared with other modern First Readers the book is bad, the subjects being *ill-chosen* and *clumsily treated*."

“The incorrect English, as, “I would” for “I should,” “as” for “to,” “real nice” for “very nice,” etc. Giving *two* pictures of a word is always confusing and insures incorrect or uncertain spelling, “many (menny)” “again (agen).” The illustrations are old and many of them very ugly and out of drawing.

“In the hands of careful children the books are fast falling to pieces.”

NOTE.—Upon the publication of the above, the editor of the “Official Organ” was promptly interviewed by the authorities, and made to perfectly understand that such work as this was not what “Organs” are for, and that if any more such stuff appeared the “Organ” would grind no more. As this meant the withdrawal of the State subscription of 2,500 copies, the cylinder containing that tune was at once taken out.

FROM THE “SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER,” NOVEMBER 10,
1890.

THE STATE READERS.

Any one who will cast an impartial eye over the State series of Readers, designed for use in our public schools, cannot fail to be impressed with their total unfitness for the purpose for which they have been prepared. They possess neither literary value nor intrinsic interest. In this day of flourishing juvenile literature, when any number of charming selections may be made from the better class of children's books and magazines, the lower Reader is almost wholly made up of the stilted language and strained conversation considered to be adapted to the entertainment of children some fifty years ago. *The ox will stand still and let the man put the yoke on him. A small boy could not put the yoke on the ox. John, did you ever ride in a boat? No; I never rode in a boat, but I should like to ride in one.* Such are specimens of the vivacious narratives which are inserted in the First Reader to enchant the little people and chain the attention of the restless small boy.

But it is not alone with the literary quality of the books that the thoughtful reader must take issue. There is nothing in them to denote that they are designed for local

use. So far as any local adaptation goes, they might as well have been prepared for the little, brown-skinned, naked savages of Timbuctoo. In fact, there is strong suspicion that they were designed to instruct the native African. In the Second Reader there is a very interesting account of the ostrich and its habits, winding up with the information that the great bird is raised on a large scale on breeding farms in the vicinity of the Cape of Good Hope. Now, it is always understood that it is of primary importance for children to be instructed regarding the industries of their own country. There is no possible reason why the book should not have contained at least a reference to the ostrich farm established by Dr. Sketchley in California some twenty years gone by, save that the little savages of Timbuctoo do not care to hear about what is going on in California, which they are probably taught is a very far-away and benighted place, where the people wear clothes and never eat each other.

It seems an ungrateful task to criticise these school Readers, when it is especially stated in the preface that the work of collating the contents has been donated by a kind and generous gentleman interested in the cause of education. The labor which he has expended in the preparation of the books has been most unselfish and magnanimous, when it is considered that his only reward has been the empty thanks embalmed in a preface which nobody reads. What he has done is much more than he was justified in doing, working without pay and amid the cares of a most exacting profession. But the State of California is not a pauper. There is no reason why she should accept intellectual alms. It is a serious question as to whether it is wise to encumber our school course with a set of Readers, for in some of the most advanced Eastern schools the children are required to read from miscellaneous books and periodicals, taking up something fresh each day, and the plan has been proved to produce better readers and more intelligent scholars than the old-fashioned method.

If we are to have a system of set Readers, however, their preparation presents a valuable opportunity for entertainment and instruction, which should not be thrown away. Every lesson they contain, down to the simplest story for the youngest child, should have literary merit. Instead of discussing the questions of how ducks swim or of the milking of the cow, or of the horses trotting, or presenting humdrum and uninteresting scenes between fictitious and

impossible children, let there be real incidents of historical or current significance, simply and attractively told. The work of preparing such text-books is one of importance, having a direct influence upon the minds of upwards of a hundred thousand children, and there is no reason why it should not be done in the best possible manner and be well paid.

Below are given several letters written to a gentleman in Indiana, in reply to the following questions :

DEPAUW UNIVERSITY,
GREENCASTLE, IND., January 11, 1889.

DEAR SIR: 1. Do you regard the three-book series of State Readers, and the other books of the series, as interesting and efficient as the various publishers' series formerly used? Give reasons.

2. Is the mode of distributing books satisfactory? If not, what is lacking?

3. Counting total outlay of money by the State, interest, losses and disadvantages, are State text-books cheaper than individual purchase in the open market?

4. Do you regard your system an advantage or a disadvantage?

An early reply will be esteemed a favor.

Respectfully yours,

S. S. PARR,
Dean of DePauw Univ'y.

SUPT. C. M. MURPHY, TULARE CO., CAL.

VISALIA, CAL., Jan. 19, 1889.—Regarding your questions, permit me to say in reply to the first, no, emphatically *no!* Text-book writers, like poets, are *born*, not *made*. Our Readers, or any series of three Readers, are not and cannot be graded as the child mind requires. The steps between the Readers is too great.

2. The mode of distributing books is unsatisfactory; too inconvenient on the part of both teacher and pupils. Besides, the system is abused, and pupils do not in all instances secure the books at the stipulated prices.

3. Our State series, including the cost of compiling by the State, and the retail prices, will, in my opinion, actually cost more than if purchased in the open market. Besides, in merit, in quality, they cannot begin to compare with

those in open markets. The manner in which our books are gotten up, the workmanship, the paper, the binding, the illustrations, etc., are *certainly inferior*. *A child will use up from two to three of our First Readers of State Series to one formerly in use.*

4. I regard our system as a positive disadvantage to the public-school system of California. In fact, the Readers, Grammar, Arithmetics, are very poor. The conclusions reached by the writer of the Grammar remind me of a donkey approaching a brass band.

As a straw to show how they are regarded by teachers in our public schools, at our annual Institute, one hundred and thirty teachers in attendance passed a unanimous resolution condemning them as unfit for use. The primary Readers are full of errors.

I have no personal interest in any series of books, and write the above as my honest opinion, formed from a personal inspection of the books, conversations with teachers throughout both county and State, and as the result of seeing the effects upon the schools under my superintendency.

Yours truly, C. H. MURPHY, Supt.

C. W. RATHBUN, BIG PINE, CAL.

BIG PINE, INYA CO., CAL., Jan. 23, 1889.—I pray that the time soon may come when we can buy school books as we do potatoes, where, and of whom we please, and thus remove book-buyers from the high prices of monopolists, and our State from the dangers of jobbery.

These ideas are expressed in a very crude manner ; but if they are of any use, you are welcome to them.

Truly yours, C. W. RATHBUN.

SUPT. J. H. SHANNON, BISHOP CREEK, CAL.

BISHOP CREEK, INYO CO., CAL., Jan. 20, 1889.—I do not regard the three-book series of Readers the means for successful teaching in mixed schools. The Third is largely made of old style pieces, good in their place, but not at all suitable to mixed country schools. Our Board has adopted other works as supplemental.

The true unjustness of the whole matter, to my mind, is in this, viz.: The *people* pay a State *tax* to buy the *plant*, and *pay* the *accruing expenses*, and *thus* pay, in some instances, more than the cost of other publications for their books.

Considering the supplemental books, it costs more to equip than under the old system.

I regard the system a disadvantage.

J. H. SHANNON, Co. Supt.

PRIN. D. C. CLARK, SANTA CRUZ, CAL.

SANTA CRUZ, CAL., Jan. 24, 1889.—1st. I do not regard the three-book series as interesting and efficient as the various publishers' series formerly used. (a) The books must be put in the same grades as a five-book series—hence each book is in the hands of pupils for a longer time; pupils usually "*run through*" the book on their own account, the pieces become old to them before the book is completed, therefore they lose interest. (b) We find it necessary in every grade to greatly supplement the Readers with other matter—more necessary now, and more matter required than formerly.

2d. The mode of distributing books through the County Superintendents and teachers, and holding teachers responsible for the collection of money from the sale of books, proved a dead letter from the start, and was never attempted to be carried out.

3d. I do not believe that the State books are any cheaper than individual purchase of similar books in the open market. When the increase in tax, interest on State investment, losses, extravagance in public expenditures be added, nothing is gained.

Again, dealers' commissions are so reduced that State books are handled oftentimes at a loss to the business man, therefore it is unjust to him.

4th. I believe the disadvantages are greater than the advantages. (a) Competition is avoided, and we do not get the best books for the least money. (b) Our State Board of Education, to whom is assigned the duty of making these books, while composed of men eminently qualified for the other duties, may be wholly incompetent for this, the most important of all. (c) In a few years the plates will become old and the matter obsolete; new plates and revisions will not be so often made as for the book that must compete in the open market.

Very truly yours,

D. C. CLARK, Prin.

SUPT. J. F. UTTER, REDWOOD CITY, CAL.

REDWOOD CITY, Jan. 24, 1889.—I will say that the three Readers hardly take the place of the five that we formerly had. It necessitates a very great amount of supplemental reading.

Yours very truly, J. F. UTTER, Co. Supt.

FROM C. H. WOODS, RIVERSIDE, CAL.

RIVERSIDE, CAL., Jan. 21, 1889.—In regard to your first question, I believe it to be the general opinion of teachers here that the State books are very much inferior to the books formerly used.

The chief faults I have found in my own personal use are their many inaccuracies. Also, the selections of which they are made up being old and worn out in most of the schools of the State.

2. The mode of distributing seems in its first operations in this county to be very imperfect :

(a) The local dealers will not handle them, as there is no margin allowed them for their profits.

(b) The County Superintendent is not sufficiently well acquainted with the individual wants of each school to buy the books for them, as it proved in their introduction at the beginning of the present term, the supply of certain books being grossly out of proportion to the demand, many of the schools being so remote that classes had to wait weeks and sometimes months before they could start in the books that were lacking.

(c) Pupils or teachers not being permitted to purchase books at the State office, I consider a great drawback to the present system.

(d) In many districts the "cash basis" of the system is a hindrance to successful work. Many ranchmen, farmers, and laborers, who are entirely honest and have to live on credit until the crops are harvested or till pay day, find it impossible to supply their children with books for some months after they are needed, as the State books cannot be sold in any way except "money in hand."

3. I feel confident that the State books will prove as costly, if not more so, than those sold by publishers :

(a) For the books are much inferior in binding, many of the books losing leaves while in use two or three weeks only.

(b) For, as already proved, a public enterprise is never so economically managed as a private business enterprise.

(c) For the management, in placing the prices of the books so low as to make them appear cheaper to the public, and not allowing the dealers anything for handling them, have made it necessary that pupils in country districts are obliged to pay such extra express and freight charges that the books ultimately cost more than were formerly paid for similar books.

(d) I most emphatically pronounce the system a disadvantage to the schools of the State, as there is not a series but what supplementary books are needed to complete the series.

C. H. WOODS.

SUPT. J. N. THOMPSON, SAN BENITO CO., CAL.

HOLLISTER, CAL., Jan. 18, 1889.—I would say that the three-book series of Readers is not satisfactory. The grading is not good, there being too much of a step from one book to another. Besides, pupils have to keep one book so long that they become tired of the book, and it is difficult to get them interested. I do not think there is a teacher in the county satisfied with the three-book series of Readers.

I think it is a disadvantage. One disadvantage is in the fact that we do not always get as good a book as we could if we were allowed to select from publishers' lists.

J. N. THOMPSON, Co. Supt.

SUPT. J. L. WILSON, COLUSA CO., CAL.

COLUSA, CAL., Jan. 22, 1889.—As to Readers. Objections: (a) The two primary works contain so many years' work that they are worn out, and new ones are necessary before a pupil finishes his book. Hence, they are really expensive.

(b) In passing from simple to difficult reading, the "steps" are "jumps" frequently. This is because there is not matter enough to make properly graded Readers.

(c) The pupils tire of the matter before they are done with the books.

Perhaps the shortcomings of the State Readers are their best features. They make supplementary Readers a necessity.

J. L. WILSON.

SUPT. W. A. KIRKWOOD, CONTRA COSTA CO., CAL.

MARTINEZ, Jan. 18, 1889.—The three Readers are not efficient; we need one more Reader and a little better grading.

At present there is not sufficient subject matter in the three books to keep the child busy for seven or eight years.

Respectfully, W. A. KIRKWOOD, Supt.

SUPT. L. W. VALENTINE, TEHAMA CO., CAL.

RED BLUFF, CAL., Jan. 17, 1889.—Collectively the series is open to several objections: 1. There is not reading matter enough.

2. They are not well graded. There is a gap between the Second and Third which can only be bridged by the use of a Third and Fourth Reader of some other series.

L. W. VALENTINE, Co. Supt.

SUPT. G. B. LYMAN, SUTTER CO., CAL.

YUBA CITY, CAL., Jan. 18, 1889.—1. I do not consider the three-book series of Readers as efficient *per se* as the series formerly used. . . . That difficulty, you will readily see, can only be overcome by the free use of supplementary reading matter, the judicious use of which depends entirely on the ability of the teacher.

Yours very truly, G. B. LYMAN, Supt.

SUPT. G. E. THURMOND, SANTA BARBARA CO. CAL.

SANTA BARBARA, CAL., Jan. 17, 1889.—The change of grade is too sudden, nor is there sufficient reading matter. I think it a costly experiment.

SUPT. W. M. FRIESNER, LOS ANGELES, CAL.

LOS ANGELES, CAL., Jan. 18, 1889.—I don't like the material in the Readers, nor the small number of books in the series. A pupil going through an eight years' course of study will have to buy one First, two Second, and two Third Readers, making five in all, at a greater expense than the ordinary set of five Readers in other series.

3. No, not so cheap.

4. A disadvantage.

(a) Because there is no saving in expense.

(b) Because we are deprived of the open market in which to select that which will best suit us.

Respectfully, W. M. FRIESNER, Supt.

SUPT. C. T. MEREDITH, SAN BUENAVENTURA CO., CAL.

SAN BUENAVENTURA, CAL., Jan. 19, 1889.—I regard the whole system an *unmitigated nuisance*. The crowning damnation of the whole business is, that it knocks out COMPETITION, as the State can hire a compiler at \$100 a month, whereas Harpers' and Appleton, and the other publishers, to win, go into the *brain* market and buy the best the world affords at any price.

C. T. MEREDITH, Supt.

SUPT. F. P. RUSSELL, SAN JOSÉ, CAL.

SAN JOSE, CAL., Jan. 18, 1889.—1st. I do not. (a) The subject matter is not so good. (b) There is not sufficient reading matter in the First and Second Readers. Hence, supplemental Readers must be bought at a great expense.

The system is a *great disadvantage*.

Very respectfully, F. P. RUSSELL, Supt.

SUPT. A. J. TIFFANY, NEVADA CO., CAL.

NEVADA CITY, CAL., Jan. 19, 1889.—I do not regard the three-book series of Readers as good as the best series published by leading firms. The proper grading cannot be done with three books. The binding is poor.

Very truly, A. J. TIFFANY, Co. Supt.

A. D. TENNEY, SALINAS CITY, CAL.

SALINAS CITY, CAL., Jan. 19, 1889.—1. The Readers are not what the teachers wish. Not enough variety is presented to each grade. Supplemental Readers are a necessity. I cannot see that we have made any gain in the quality of Readers, while we have lost much in the amount of reading offered to each pupil.

Competition in an open market, controlled by proper officials would, it seems to me, give better books and more of them for the same amount.

A. D. TENNEY.

SUPT. ROBT. FURLONG, MARION CO., CAL.

SAN RAFAEL, CAL., Jan. 21, 1889.—Question 1. No; a series of Readers consisting of three books only cannot be satisfactorily graded without making the books too large. In addition to the three books published by the

State, our teachers find it necessary to use several supplementary Readers in order to do good work. Again, State books are inferior.

2. Not satisfactory. It imposes work and expense upon school officers, for which they are neither compensated nor reimbursed.

3. I think that in a moneyed sense the State will gain nothing by publishing text-books.

4. I regard the State publishing business as a disadvantage to the educational interests of California.

Yours truly, ROBERT FURLONG, Co. Supt.

SUPT. MRS. HARRIET A. GROVER, ALPINE CO., CAL.

MARKLEVILLE, Jan., 16, 1889.—In reply to your first question, I will say that the teachers often speak unfavorably of the State Series of text-books.

I regard your system a disadvantage.

HARRIET A. GROVER, Co. Supt.

SUPT. J. W. LINSOTT, SANTA CRUZ CO., CAL.

WATSONVILLE, CAL., Jan. 16, 1889.—Experience is that the Readers must be supplemented with other Readers. You will see by our course of study, a copy of which I send, that we have provided for supplementary Readers.

I am not favorable to a State series, and believe, on the whole, that the system is a disadvantage.

J. W. LINSOTT, Co. Supt.

Many other similar statements are omitted for want of space; it would seem that sufficient evidence had been produced.

One fatal difficulty inseparable from State publication has been several times alluded to in the foregoing extracts—the inevitable jobbery attending all stages of the work and even infecting the preparation of the manuscript; instead of advertising for manuscripts, and offering inducements liberal enough to set the ablest minds of the country at work in competition, which, as the only sensible course, the County Superintendents in their report assumed would

be done (see their report, p. above), the State Board of Education were carried away by the prevailing howl for "cheap books," and finding that good men would not work except for good pay, hired various teachers who happened to be their friends and needed a job, and set them at work writing books by the month. This may seem incredible, but it is the literal truth that the entire California State Series has been "compiled" in that way.

Another inevitable element of State publication is the certainty that the personal "fads" of those charged with the preparation of the texts will be incorporated in the State books and rammed down the people's throats by the strong arm of the law. The best of teachers and school-book authors have their notions peculiar to themselves, which they all seek to incorporate in their books, and of which, in fact, many do appear therein, and impart to the books their life, originality, interest, and value ; but in the criticism, discussion, and pruning which the publishing houses demand before they will invest their money, the idiosyncracies of the authors become modified and adapted to general assimilation and use ; and after all, if the books, when published, do not in the main accord with the general experience and judgment, or present such moderate and gradual steps of advancement in method as the great body of teachers are prepared to receive and apply, then *nobody is obliged to use the books* ; they simply fail and go out of print, and the publisher is the only loser. When, however, the very men who prepare the books have the power to enact that they shall be used in the schools of an entire State, there is no safeguard, and the schools suffer. It is of course understood that in California the members of the State Board are those really responsible for the books ; they

would write them if they had time, but as they have not, they hire men to write what they tell them, and they insist upon the same obedience on the part of their hired men that other employers are accustomed to require.

One prominent instance of this in the California State Series is frequently alluded to in the above letters. Somebody had a notion that "three Readers were enough," in place of the *five* which universal experience has found necessary to proper grading and economy; the ignorant men who originated the scheme seized upon the idea, the State board adopted it, and the result is a set of books which every teacher, even were they otherwise unobjectionable, would be compelled to condemn on that ground alone; they waste faster in use, have to be largely supplemented with outside books, and in every way cause loss to the people. In all such matters the general experience is the only safeguard; well may ex-State Superintendent Campbell protest, in the magazine article already quoted (see page 47), against the State being compelled to adopt, in advance of their publication, the works of unknown and untried authors, when, as a school officer, he would not be willing to adopt in that way the books even of the best known and most successful.

But quite enough has been said; the results of the wretched business may be very briefly summed up:

In an interval of madness the people of California permitted a few mercenary and ignorant demagogues to impair the cherished and sacred educational interests of their children in order to swell the profits of a political State Printer.

The State Printer promised an enormous pecuniary saving, and has effected an enormous pecuniary loss.

The State Printer and the State Board of Education together have saddled upon the people of California, for an indefinite time, a series of books which no private publisher would issue, and which no school officer would adopt — nay, more than that, books which even the State Board of Education of California would not have adopted had they been produced by anybody but themselves.*

We venture to predict that the California State school-book system will not endure five years longer.

As this pamphlet is going to press, the following extracts from leading papers of the State come to hand :

FROM THE "SIERRA VALLEY LEADER," FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1890.

STATE SCHOOL BOOKS CONDEMNED.

The committee appointed last week to consider the Superintendent's recommendation relative to the adoption by the Legislature of a free text-book system submitted the following report :

"While we report favorably on this recommendation, still it is the sense of your committee that the State series of text-books, with the exception of the Language Lessons and Elementary Geography, is in no way adapted to the needs of the public schools of the State and are working an irreparable injury to our public-school system. We believe the California State Series is inferior to any other series of text-books now in existence, and we believe that to this series is due entirely the present overcrowded course of study, and we earnestly recommend that immediate action be taken to revise the whole series, the books mentioned excepted."

The report was signed by the following County Superintendents: L. J. Chipman, of Santa Clara; A. Harrel, of Kern; B. F. Foss, of Plumas; O. F. Seavey, Superintendent-elect of Placer; J. H. Renfro, of Lake; G. E. Thurmond, of Santa Barbara.

Owing to the severity of the report, a motion was made to lay it on the table. The motion was lost by a vote of 23 to 24. The report was referred to the Committee on Resolutions, who subsequently modified the report by of-

* This is no attack upon the integrity of the State Board; they doubtless believe the books to be good because they made them.

fering the following resolution, which was adopted, practically by a unanimous vote :

“*Resolved*, That while certain of the State text-books—notably the Primary Language Lessons and Elementary Geography—have met the approbation of the public-school teachers of the State, we desire to record our severe criticisms and disapproval of others of the State series and express our judgment that their thorough revision by competent authorities, so as to adapt them to the wants of the schools, is imperative and should be entered upon at once.”

The resolution was signed by the following Superintendents: L. J. Chipman, of Santa Clara; R. W. Fisher, of Alameda, and G. Goodell, of San Joaquin. While the report was under discussion Superintendent Hoitt was silent, and it was understood that the report and resolution did not meet with his approval. State Superintendent-elect Anderson favored the resolution. Superintendents Hoitt and Anderson were made a committee to present to the next Legislature such suggestions as to the incorporation of kindergarten schools into the public-school system of the State as in their judgment they may deem wise. Superintendent Fisher, of Alameda, Howard, of Sacramento, Chipman, of Santa Clara, Howard, of Stanislaus, Webster, of Solano, and ex-Superintendent Campbell, of Oakland, were appointed a committee to act in conjunction with the State Superintendent in presenting to the Legislature the recommendations and suggestions adopted by the convention.

We are much pleased with the above report, as we have published several articles in this paper upon the same subject. We say again—what we have said before—the reading books are better calculated to make ninnies than they are to make scholars. Not two per cent. of the lessons in the Reading Series are fit for use in the public schools. The report of the committee was not too severe and the right men should be put on the committee to push the good work of revision through the coming Legislature, and men of intelligence, with ideas above those of the sixteenth century, put on the revision committee.

The foundation for the future man or woman (as a rule) is laid while the child is ten years of age, and every lesson from the First Reader up should be full of useful ideas in some branch of knowledge, as we shall find no advancement and the pupil is only commencing to learn at fifteen what they should have known at eight years of age. The

tendency of the present Readers is to novel reading, which is as degrading as the use of tobacco on the pupil's intelligence.

The committee attribute the present over-crowded course of study to the worthless series of books, and very justly too. There is no intelligence in them and the ideas the pupils gather from them are as barren of fruit for future higher grades of study, or even to make intelligent men and women in after life, as an oyster shell. The child from six to twelve years is more capable of grasping ideas and requires more to fill its rapidly growing mind than during any other six years of its existence, and it is actual cruelty to the children of our State to be imposed upon by such a worse than worthless series of text-books.

Every teacher and newspaper in the State should give encouragement to the committee who have made the bold and able report, and also encourage legislation on so important a matter. The suggestion for the incorporation of kindergarten schools in the public-school system is a good and very important suggestion. We are much pleased to know State Superintendent-elect Anderson is in favor of the report of the committee on improvement in our text-books.

The strong vote to table the report shows how many enemies our public-school system has among the county superintendents of the State. The one majority will, however, serve to bring the matter before the Legislature and the people. Plumas County should feel no little pride in their county superintendent of schools, Mr. B. R. Foss, for being one of six to make and sign the able report. Much good will result in bringing the important matter before the Legislature and the people, even though the suggestions of the committee are not matured this season.

With State Superintendent-elect Anderson at the head of school affairs next year, the good work will have an able advocate and much will, we sincerely hope, be accomplished, and that every suggestion may be carried out to the letter is the desire of every true lover of our public-school system.

The school money is mostly squandered by the worthlessness of the text-books. We have advocated this principle for over twenty years, but were about to despair of ever living to see the work commenced, but the bold, able and sweeping report at the first attempt at the long-needed reform gives us new hope and new courage to do what we can in aiding the noblest institution of this Republic—the common-school system.

"DAILY HUMBOLDT TIMES," EUREKA, CAL., WEDNES-
DAY, DECEMBER 10, 1890.

STATE TEXT-BOOKS.

The Convention of County Superintendents adopted the following resolution:

"*Resolved*, That while certain of the State text-books—notably the Primary Language Lessons and Elementary Geography—have met the approbation of the public-school teachers of the State, we desire to record our severe criticism and disapproval of others of the State series and express our judgment that their thorough revision by competent authors, so as to adapt them to the wants of the schools, is imperative and should be entered upon at once."

A much stronger resolution was at first passed by a vote of 24 to 23, but it was afterward modified and the above passed almost unanimously.

In connection with this, we wish to say that any one can go to Bonstell's store and purchase books of almost any series, books much superior to those provided by the State, for less than we are charged for State books. The Constitution was amended to allow of the State providing text-books primarily on the ground of economy. It was thought that the "school-book ring" was "robbing" the people. Like most of such instances where abuses are charged—principally by graceless demagogues—it has been demonstrated that the people for five years have been robbing themselves. They have robbed their children of the privilege of securing the best obtainable text-books, robbed the teachers of the chance of obtaining the best results in school work and robbed the poor parent of dollars and cents, for never did the child's text-books cost as much as they do now under the State plan.

It is time that Californians awakened to the fact that this State does not contain all the talent in the world. Men have been engaged for years in perfecting school books for Eastern publishers, and they have reduced the question to a special science. A whole corps of experts is constantly employed by a firm like the Appletons or the Harpers, and they enjoy the benefit of long experience and almost unlimited capital. The governmental production of text-books should have been postponed until Bellamy establishes his millennium.

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State School Books Condemned.

[Special to the EXAMINER.]

SACRAMENTO, CAL., December 3.—The committee appointed to consider Super-

State School Books Condemned.

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SACRAMENTO, CAL., December 3.—The committee appointed to consider Superintendent Hoitt's recommendation relative to the adoption by the Legislature of a free text-book system submitted the following report :

While we report favorably on this recommendation, still it is the sense of your committee that the State series of text-books, with the exception of the Language Lessons and Elementary Geography, is in no way adapted to the needs of the public schools of the State and are working an irreparable injury to our public school system. We believe the California State series is inferior to any other series of text-books now in existence, and we believe that to this series is due entirely the present over-crowded course of study, and we earnestly recommend that immediate action be taken to revise the whole series, the books mentioned excepted.

The report was signed by the following County Superintendents : L. J. Chipman of Santa Clara, A. Harrel of Kern, B. R. Foss of Plumas, O. F. Seavey, Superintendent-elect of Placer ; J. H. Renfro of Lake, G. E. Thurman of Santa Barbara.

Owing to the severity of the report a motion was made to lay it on the table. The motion was lost by a vote of 23 to 24. The report was referred to the Committee on Resolutions, who subsequently modified the report by offering the following resolution, which was adopted, practically by a unanimous vote:

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The convention adjourned to meet two years hence.

To-night the Superintendents and delegates are being entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Hoitt at their residence.—*From The San Francisco Examiner*, December 4th, 1890.

State Text Books.

Reprinted from the *Daily Humboldt Times*, Eureka, California, Wednesday, December 10, 1890.

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It is time that Californians awakened to the fact that this State does not contain all the talent in the world. Men have been engaged for years in perfecting school books for Eastern publishers, and they have reduced the question to a special science. A whole corps of experts is constantly employed by a firm like the Appleton's or the Harper's, and they enjoy the benefit of long experience and almost unlimited capital. The governmental production of text-books should have been postponed until Bellamy establishes his millenium.

THE CALIFORNIA EXPERIMENT IN STATE MANUFACTURE OF SCHOOL TEXT-BOOKS.

*Reprinted from "School Journal,"
New York, Nov. 15, 1890,*

This scheme originated in 1882 when some politicians conceived the idea of furnishing home-made text-books to the public schools of the state of California at a much lower rate than private publishers could afford to give. The plan was based largely upon some extraordinary estimates made by the then state printer (James J. Ayres), who submitted a report (January, 1883) to the legislature in which he asserted that books corresponding in quality to those in common use if manufactured by the state would cost as follows :

Speller	-	-	-	8.126 cents.
First Reader	-	-	-	9.286 cents.
Second Reader	-	-	-	17.920 cents.
Third Reader	-	-	-	24.244 cents.
Arithmetic	-	-	-	28.891 cents.
Grammar	-	-	-	20.167 cents.
History	-	-	-	20.658 cents.
Geography, (about)	-	-	-	35. cents.

To these figures he thought it proper to add 25 per cent. for wear and tear of machinery and cost of distribution, making the net cost of a complete series delivered to the consumer \$2.16 !

To effect all this the state printer estimated that the only investment of capital required on the part of the state would be for machinery and extra bindery facilities, \$32,485.37, besides "a mere trifle" for sorting up type.

Two years later (when the state had become definitely committed to the scheme) the same state printer made a new estimate for the same purpose (as appears by the Governor's message for 1885) amounting this time to \$115,000 ! But even this would not suffice, for subsequently the state printer and the state board of education asked for an appropriation of \$250,000 to *begin* the work, and \$170,000 was actually appropriated at that time, viz. ; \$150,000 for the printer and \$20,000 for "compiling"—a significant contrast between the mechanical and intellectual processes necessary to produce good school books ! It should be said in passing, however, that there is a real distinction between "compiling" (e. g. stealing) and actual authorship. No provision was ever made by our California friends for original work in training the minds of children by their text-books.

State printer Ayres was succeeded by State Printer Shoaf who complains at once that "the cost of manufac-

turing the state text-books as given by my predecessor falls short of the actual expenditures," and enumerates a lot of items which he said has not been considered. Mr. Shoaf promised to estimate enough in future, but as his tenure of office was short he never had the opportunity.

Mr. Shoaf was succeeded by State Printer Young who found everything out of sorts and demanded (report of 1888) that "the whole outfit of book department should be sold and a new one provided," stating also that the text-books were being sold at "much less than the cost of manufacture," although "printed on paper of poor quality and bound in an unsubstantial manner; the volumes fell apart after very little use, and the complaint against them was universal." To help him do better and to carry the printing office through the fiscal year, he asked (December 28, 1888) for \$65,000 extra appropriation.

But we have somewhat anticipated our history and must return to 1882-3 while the scheme was under discussion. A few warning voices, but only a few, were lifted. Among them, however, was that of the State Convention of County School Superintendents. These competent and intelligent gentlemen adopted unanimously (December, 1882) a report on the subject; from which we quote. After showing that \$30,535.90 would "purchase all the readers, spellers, geographies, and arithmetics required for a year by the pupils at the public schools of the state," at the prices charged by private publishers, and the folly of attempting to save anything by legislative interference out of a sum comparatively so small, the report proceeds to exhibit the probable actual cost of authorship, the preparation of plates, and of manufacturing the books at a much higher figure with a great risk of poorer work; refers to the great loss involved in discarding all the good books in the hands of children when the change should be made, and concludes, as follows: "We are constrained to advise against the state undertaking to print, publish, or 'provide' any of the school text-books."

These able "findings" were followed a year later by a report made by a distinguished committee to the California State Teachers' Association, which estimates the entire sales of common school books in California at \$30,000 per annum,—that such books could be provided by a private publishing house in not less time than five years and by an expenditure of at least \$150,000 in preparation,—that the expense of the state, working in the usual "large" public way, would not be less than \$200,000 for the same purpose,—that the annual cost of manufacturing the books would not be less than \$30,000, exclusive of the expense of transacting the business,—that the estimate of the state printer (before referred to) was "defective, erroneous, and misleading."—that the preparation of good text-books requires "the greatest skill.

judgment, experience, and patience,"—that comparatively few text-books give general satisfaction, and the first attempt under state publication will probably be "crude, unsatisfactory, and discreditable,"—that such imperfections will call for new appropriations for amended editions and "evoke political attack, renewed changes of books, legislative enquiry and public scandal,"—that "no state ought to attempt any business which can be successfully managed by private enterprise," while competition is the surest guarantee of good and cheap service,—and that private publishers who publish for 50,000,000 people can give better satisfaction than a state which, "after incurring the same or greater preliminary expense, would publish for less than 1,000 000."

In view of this admirable and conclusive report the State Teachers' Association of 1883 unanimously adopted the following resolution: "That in the opinion of this Association the publication of school text books by this state is inexpedient and impracticable, and will, if attempted, result in great pecuniary loss to the state, and expensive and unsatisfactory books for our schools." All of which, at present, constitutes a very interesting example of fulfilled prophecy.

We will now compare the original promises of State Printer Ayres with the results achieved already, although the "state list" is not yet completed:

Actual permanent investment in state school books to Dec. 31, 1890.			
Legislative Appropriation, 1885	-		\$170,000.
Legislative Appropriation, 1887	-	-	197,500.
Estimated value of books discarded to make			
room for state books	-	-	250,000.
Interest on the foregoing sums	-	-	93,460.
			<hr/>
			715,960.
Deduct state printer's original estimate	-		<hr/> 32,485.37

Excess above state printer's estimate - 683,474.63

But besides this sum expended by the state, the people have contributed \$221,377 in the purchase of books at prices in equally grotesque disproportion to the state printer's estimates, thus:

	Original estimate of Mr. Ayres.	Net prices charged by the state.	Net prices charged by private pub- lishers for cor- responding books.
1st Reader - -	\$.09 1-4	.15	.13
2nd Reader - -	.18	.33	.27
3rd Reader - -	.24 1-4	.54	.60
Speller - -	.08 1-8	.25	.16
Arithmetic - -	.28 3-4	Elem .20	.22
		Adv. .42	.37
Grammar - -	.20 1-4	Elem .25	.28
		Adv. .42	.48
History - -	.29 1-2	.70	.67
<hr/>		<hr/>	<hr/>
1.38 1-8		3.26	3.18

It will add to the significance of this table to remind the reader that in printing, illustrations, binding, and general appearance the state books cannot for a moment compare with those issued from the leading private publishing houses. If to the apparent cost of state books as shown by the table, should be added the proper proportion of interest on permanent investment the price of the state set would be increased over 40 per cent.

The foregoing prices of state books, however, are not by any means those which the people pay. They are sold to the dealers, who are privileged to add their profit to the state prices so that the people of California pay in reality, more than 102 per cent. above the prices named in Mr. Ayres's estimate.

First Reader	-	-	-	.20 cents.
Second Reader	-	-	-	.40 cents.
Third Reader	-	-	-	.65 cents.
Speller	-	-	-	.30 cents.
Arithmetic, Primary	-	-		.25 cents.
“ Advanced	-	-		.50 cents.
Grammar, Primary	-	-		.30 cents.
“ Advanced	-	-		.50 cents.
History	-	-	-	.80 cents.
				<hr/>
The set (as it costs the people)				\$2.90
The set (Mr. Ayres's estimate)				-\$1.38
				<hr/>
Difference	-	-	-	\$2.52

The *San Francisco Chronicle* comments upon the wide discrepancy still remaining between these prices and the actual cost, as follows : “The state must pay in some way or other 47 cents for every book published, for each book costs (average) 72 cents and sells for 25 cents, and each has to be paid for. It would be interesting to know whether the arithmetics prepared by the state printing department contain such an example as this for instance, ‘If the state pays 72 cents for this arithmetic and sells it to John Jones for 25 cents, how much additional tax will John Jones’ father have to pay to make the state even on the text-book humbug’?”

It is not our purpose, at present, to refer to the literary quality of the books produced “to order” under this extraordinary legislation. It is conceded that the books referred to are in quality far below those accessible to scholars in other states. It is enough to ask now, whether books of a poor quality should be made by a state, and forced upon the scholars of its public schools, in this free and enlightened America, as it is done in California?